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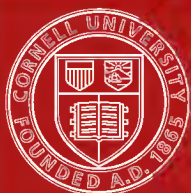
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The Princess of Hanover,



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THE PRINCESS OF HANOVER. By MARGARET L. WOODS.

THE PRINCESS OF HANOVER

BY

MARGARET L. WOODS



LONDON

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³ TO
B E L L A
1880-1892

A PREFACE: BEING SOME REMARKS ON ENGLISH VERSE

"Shakespeare . . . as he threw off the trammels of his early style . . . came to determine his rhythm by stress, and Milton did just the same. . . . Immediately English verse is written free from a numeration of syllables, it falls back on the number of stresses as a determining law."

"Milton's Prosody."—ROBERT BRIDGES.

FOR a writer of verse to preface his own work by remarks on the theory of English verse, is plainly a rash proceeding. He appears to be saying, "Here is the correct theory and there the model performance." I have no such meaning, but think it convenient to put the few remarks I have to make on a subject obviously not interesting to the general public, in a place where no one expects to find anything of interest—namely, a preface. That it is a subject which does not engage attention is proved by the small effect which Mr. Robert Bridges' scholarly tract, from which I have quoted above, has produced. It dealt exhaustively with the prosody

of Milton, and therefore incidentally with the structure of blank verse, stating with precision the root principle of stress. After such a contribution to the theory of our poetic art by a poet whose works are so widely known, it ought to be superfluous for me to labour a point with which he has already dealt. But although his tract has been published for some twelve years, I do not observe that our critics, either in the newspapers or in conversation, show any greater consciousness of the existence of English prosody than they did a dozen years ago. Classical terms and rules more inapplicable to our verse than the terms and rules of music, are freely applied to it by classically educated men, while others, untrained in the classical system, either adopt its phraseology as well as they know how or fall back on the mechanical measure of syllables. Such a measure was almost inevitable in French, a language in which the component syllables of a word tend to stand on a footing of republican equality; but in English one syllable usually dominates the others. It is for this reason, this stressed quality of the language, that English prose falls so readily into rhythm. That it does so is an oft-repeated commonplace which would appear to lead straight to the root of the matter as concerning English prosody; but it has been left unpursued, a mere blind alley.

That English prosody, over-laid from the beginning with fragments of foreign systems, under which it has, nevertheless, continued to assert its

individuality, should be difficult to understand, is no wonder. It is, in truth, a complicated affair, and I should be sorry myself to pretend to a complete comprehension of it. And it would be absurd to complain because the British public is not interested in the theory of verse, for the British public is not interested in the theory of anything. Nor do I believe that the public elsewhere is found in a more animated attitude towards such questions than one of distant respect for those who have successfully studied them. "The world is so full of a number of things," as Stevenson has said, that most of us must be content to remain ignorant about nearly all of them. But it may reasonably be complained that whereas some technical knowledge is required of one who would be accounted a connoisseur in any other art, craft or branch of learning, in poetry nothing of the kind is considered necessary. One perceives the reason for this distinction, but it has been pressed too far. No great while ago I saw in a respected literary paper a passage of excellent blank verse quoted for reprobation because it contained a line of nine syllables. The critic had here set forth to criticise in such ignorance of the theory and practice of English prosody as to be unaware that blank verse could be written on principles other than syllabic, and had been so written by Milton and Shakespeare; and that although nine-syllabled lines are by no means so common in it as lines of twelve or more syllables, they may be found and are not open to any theoretical

objection. To go no further than Marlowe, who died before he had completely freed his verse from the fetters of the ten-syllabled pseudo-iambic, there is a nine-syllabled line in one of the finest passages of "Tamberlane." Indeed, I cannot tell where the critics get their rules; nor yet, as I think, can they. In the matter of rhyme I do not believe any poet—unless the more modern contributors to "Hymns Ancient and Modern"—ever observed the "rules" which continue to be quoted.

To begin at the beginning. What is rhyme? It is a similar collocation of vowel and consonantal sounds preceded by a different consonantal sound, or merely by the omission of such a sound, as *farm*, *arm*.

To go back before the beginning. What is the written or printed letter? It is a sign representing a sound. It may be maintained that we have reached a stage in which collocations of letters represent ideas directly, without any intermediary idea of sound. As regards prose, such a view is defensible, although it does not appear to me to be correct. But as regards poetry, the twin-sister of music, it is plainly inadmissible. In poetry, letters can be nothing but signs representing sounds. It happens—and in English especially—that the same sound may be represented by a great variety of different signs. This irregularity of representation has caused unnecessary travail of mind to certain remote and unknown law-givers, who have given us two phrases to meet our imaginary difficulty. One

is "rhyme to the ear," as great a redundancy of expression as though one should say, "music to the ear." The other is "rhyme to the eye," as great an absurdity as though one should talk of "music to the eye."

Yet these phrases would not be worth comment if the rule of "rhyme to the ear" were carried to its logical conclusion ; for it starts with an apparent recognition of the nature of rhyme, as defined above. A recognition, that is, of the fact that a rhyme is essentially a sound, and that provided two words ring true to each other in sound, the particular letter-signs used to express it are immaterial. They no more alter its value than two different forms of notation would alter a musical phrase. This is admitted in most cases, for rhymed poetry could not exist in English if it were not. In some cases, on the other hand, arbitrary lines have been drawn by the unknown law-givers ; lines which the poets, however, have little respected. I open a volume of Tennyson at a venture and find the following rhymes thick upon the page : *blows—those, nursed—first, grown—alone, worth—earth, dew—you, nigh—I*. These occur in the *Lines to J. S.*, and have never, I believe, been called in question ; nor should they be, for the words chime exactly with each other. Yet I observe rhymes good for the same reason, as *palm—arm, morn—dawn*, falling under the mysterious ban of critical rules. A foreigner might be led to suppose that the *l* in *palm* and the *r* in *arm* and *morn* were slightly pronounced ; but we know that

they are not. They are both equally signs having no independent value, but merely serving to broaden the preceding vowel. In our standard modern English *r* before a consonant is never pronounced, and to pretend that it is is a useless fiction. This particular sound is dead and buried, and there is evidence to show that in Middlesex it never existed. From the literary point of view it was a misfortune that London became the capital of England, for almost any other part of the country would have yielded us a nobler and more varied speech. But circumstances have caused the clipped dialect of the Middle Saxon to be the matrix of standard English, and rhyme must be determined by pronunciation as it is, not as it might be.

Rhyme is for the tickling of the ear ; what then is meant by "rhyme to the eye" ? Something ; but something else. For where is the appeal of poetry to the eye ? Is it in an elegant arrangement of lines ? Then is an eighteenth-century epitaph on a church wall as pleasing as a stanza of the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*. But, indeed, they are both poor forms of decorative art, and a sixpenny Japanese fan must be bad if it is not better. We enjoy reading poetry to ourselves, not because our eyes delight in certain arrangements of lines and letters, but because, like a skilled musician reading a score, we know the musical effects they represent. If these so-called "rhymes to the eye" have been freely used by the poets, it is for the very reason that they are not true rhymes. The ear grows weary of the

regular beat of true rhyme upon it, and welcomes the relief of a partial resemblance, in English usually consonantal. That this is the true explanation of their use will be apparent when it is considered that no one has ever treated *rough* and *bough* as rhymes, although if identity of spelling could make them so, there are none better in the dictionary. For the same reason the poets have never ceased and never will cease to use what are called "bad," that is, imperfect rhymes. In that masterpiece of lyric harmony, Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, there occur such rhymes as *sepulchre—atmosphere, even—heaven—given*; and the perfect use of these imperfect rhymes is an element in its beauty.

To pass from the *Ode to the West Wind* to the verse of the following play is a descent too steep to be contemplated. Those who have accepted the principle of stressed verse may find much to criticise in mine, but not much that requires explanation.

NOTE.—The above was written before the republication of Mr. Bridges' *Prosody of Milton* (1901).

PERSONAGES

ERNEST AUGUSTUS, ELECTOR OF HANOVER.

SOPHIA, ELECTRESS OF HANOVER.

GEORGE, ELECTORAL PRINCE OF HANOVER, *afterwards George I. of England.*

SOPHIE DOROTHEA, ELECTORAL PRINCESS OF HANOVER, *daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Zell. Called by Königsmarck, Léonisse.*

THE DUKE OF ZELL, *brother of the Elector of Hanover.*

THE DUCHESS OF ZELL, *formerly Eléonore d'Olbreuse, and morganatic wife of the Duke.*

CLARA VON PLATEN, *commonly called Madame Platen, Mistress en titre of the Elector.*

ERMINGARDA VON SCHULENBURG, *Mistress of the Electoral Prince of Hanover.*

PRINCE CHARLES	} <i>younger sons of the Elector.</i>
PRINCE MAX	
PRINCE ERNEST	

The young PRINCE GEORGE and the little PRINCESS, children of the Electoral Prince and Princess of Hanover.

PHILIP VON KÖNIGSMARCK, *a Swedish nobleman and officer in the Hanoverian Army.*

AURORA VON KÖNIGSMARCK, *his sister, and a celebrated beauty.*

LEONORA VON KNESEBECK, *lady-in-waiting to the Electora Princess of Hanover.*

VON MESBACH, *a courtier and spy of Madame Platen's.*

HILDEBRAND, *secretary to Königsmarck.*

COUNT VON PLATEN, *husband to Madame Platen.*

CONRAD, *soldier servant to Königsmarck.*

BARONESS VON HEINEBURG, *lady-in-waiting to the Electress.*

BARON VON BLASEWITZ

COUNTESS VON DUDERSTADT } *Hanoverian courtiers.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN }

BARON VON BÖHL

VON LINDAU

AND OTHERS

} *officers in the Hanoverian Army.*

THE FRENCH ENVOY *at the Court of Hanover.*

THE GOVERNOR OF THE CASTLE OF AHLDEN.

COURT PHYSICIANS.

INN-KEEPER'S WIFE AT AHLDEN *and her daughter* GRETEL

GENTLEMAN-IN-ATTENDANCE ON THE PRINCESS.

HALBERDIERS.

A MESSENGER.

THE PRINCESS OF HANOVER

OVERTURE

*The garden at Herrenhausen on a summer evening.
A terrace is seen on the left, with steps descending
to the garden and a marble bench below it. The
terrace runs back from the eye, and parallel to it is
a view of fountains, formal alleys, clipped trees
and statues. HILDEBRAND is seated on the bench
below the terrace playing upon the lute and
singing*

THE BALLAD OF THE MAIDEN AND THE ELFIN LOVER.

*Hushed are the houses, the lamps are all sleeping,
But the moon, the white moon is awake.
At eve the spinners tell beside the doorway
Of evil spirits and their accursed love,
Fiercer than hate. Close well the curtains,
For the moon—and what beside?—is awake.*

Dark and warm the narrow room,
But the gold and silver broom
On the perfumed hills was blowing
When the maiden went there alone.

Forth she went with swinging hair,
While the moon in heaven's bare
Rode the vacant pathway showing.
By the shore the maiden walked alone.

Nothing moved but on the sand
Shadows like a dial hand,
Slender shade of feathered sedges,
Broad rock-shadows veering under the moon.

Ere the shadows had moved a span
Waking or sleeping she saw a man,
On the bare and bright sea-edges,
A man of Elfland under the moon.

Yet the maiden had no fear ;
Her seemed she had loved him a long year,
Oft had seen him pale for her kisses,
Often looked on him silent for love.

In an hour they knew must end,
All of their hearts they two did spend,
Spent their store of mortal blisses
Spent in an hour the long wonder of love.

When the primrose morning crept
Low along the sky, she slept ;
Still in the dark of heaven above her
Small as a jewel hung the glittering moon.

Hushed and wan the morning broke,
Wonderingly the girl awoke,
Saw no more the elfin lover
Nor gentle shadows following the white moon.

In the unsubstantial day
Far off the floating hills were gray,
She looked across the airy water
And idly through her fingers poured the sand.

Suddenly her heart began
To beat, for she saw the steps of a man.
Trembling from the ground she caught her
And followed them along the lonely sand.

They ended where a great stone
Like a ruined tower stood alone.
At the blind gate she marked more clearly
The track, for in every step was blood.

She beat at the stone on 'every side,
"Let me come to my love!" she cried,
"Let me in, for I love him dearly,"
And, "Who is this that hath shed his heart's blood?"

At length deep in the rock, one said,
Fiercely shrieking, "My love is dead.
I have killed him, accursed mortal."
Laughing, "And I have avenged him. Go thy way."

Fishermen with chants begun
To haul their net in the sparkling sun;
Turning from the closed portal
Silent she stared on them and went her way.

At every step she seemed to feel
Cutting her heart a knife of steel.
Treading slow, as heavy-laden,
Home she came and beat at her father's door.

She turned and saw down the dusty street
Blood in the tracks of her own feet.
Never knew the dead maiden
Whether any opened her father's door.

*At eve the spinners tell beside the doorway
Of evil spirits and their accursed love.*

[HILDEBRAND goes out, up the garden
as he sings.

ACT I

SCENE I

*The garden at Herrenhausen, with the terrace, as before.
Evening as before. The ELECTORAL PRINCE OF
HANOVER, PRINCE CHARLES, and PRINCE MAX
come along the terrace.*

Electoral Prince. God be thanked that is over!

Prince Max. I should give greater thanks if it had never been. Pork stew, beef stew, mutton stew, onion pudding, and all served with grease! Bah!

Electoral Prince. I like grease; it is wholesome. It was a good German dinner and so will I always eat. I hate your French kickshaws. No, I did not thank God I had got away from dinner, I thanked God I had got away from my mother.

Prince Charles. And your mother, not being pious, is only thanking her stars she has got away from you.

Electoral Prince. England, always England! But her Highness has never been to England and I have. They are mad, the English, they have no respect, no etiquette. I don't want to be King of England; they would take off my head with no more ado than if I were a pullet.

Prince Charles. You can give the place to Max if you don't want it.

Prince Max. I would rather have the money.

Electoral Prince. No, no, the money is just what I want. Tell me, Charles, you who are so clever, what can I do? It's the same cursed business as my marriage. I had to take my wife to get the money, and now in the end I shall have to take England to get the money. It's devilish hard.

Prince Charles. Treat England the same way as you have treated your wife. Take her—and neglect her.

Prince Max. Give me half the money and I'll take both—England and your wife.

Electoral Prince. I wish I had thought of that before I married. You're such a fool, Max. I believe you would have taken the French Madame's jade of a daughter for less than half her dowry.

Prince Max. *Parbleu!* Prince, I would!

Prince Charles. And so would I, and so would any man except you, George.

Electoral Prince. Bah! She's not a real princess. Any one can see that.

Prince Max. Ay, that they can! For I never yet had a real princess offered me in marriage but she had a shape like a sack full of meal and eyes like boiled gooseberries. But Sophie! O such a shape! And a mouth—and eyes—O such eyes!

Electoral Prince. You're in love with my wife.

Prince Charles. And so am I.

Electoral Prince. But that's nothing.

Prince Max. No, for as every one knows she is damnably, utterly heartless, a complete coquette.

Electoral Prince. I don't approve of your flirting with my wife. That is certainly not etiquette. Now if some one else ran away with her I should not mind so much, for then I could kill him and she also would trouble me no more.

Prince Charles. Beware, Electoral Highness! Remember your own precious existence hangs upon the Princess of Hanover's. Is it not written in the stars that you yourself must die within a year of your wife? No, no! Whatever happens you cannot kill Sophie.

Electoral Prince. I cannot even wish her to die. It is a cursed prophecy and I would to Heaven I could forget it. But I might shut her up somewhere as safe as though she were in the grave, and never see her and never hear of her any more. I hate my wife, I hate the Princess of Hanover.

Prince Charles. You are drunk, George.

Electoral Prince. Not very drunk. How can I be? Did you ever taste such liquor as the Elector gives us? I have ordered some good French wine to the pavilion yonder and some friends to help drink it. You can come if you choose, brothers. It is all one to me. [Goes out.]

Prince Charles. Our precious brother!

Prince Max. Our precious elder brother—with the principalities of Zell, Osnabrück, and Hanover, and it may be the crown of England to boot, all

piled on his boar's head ! 'Tis for him we younger sons are stripped of our rights and dignities, 'tis for his sake that we are beggared.

[*The ELECTOR and ELECTRESS come along the terrace accompanied by the PRINCESS OF HANOVER and her children, the young PRINCE GEORGE and the little Princess, ELEONORE, DUCHESS OF ZELL, and ladies and gentlemen.*]

Electress. England ! I boast my England ? I do boast her :

Say to be monarch there's a sovereignty
Sole in a world of thrones. Who governs Eng-
and

Rules over men.

Elector. Here then what do we, Madam ?

Electress. Herd sheep.

Elector. [*Sings.*]

*A doublet green and silken hose,
Rose, rose,
A golden crook as shepherds use
For thee I'll choose—*

[*Bowing.*] Madam, my shepherdess at your good service—

Your dainty shepherd !

Duchess. [*To the ELECTOR.*] Highness, your sheep at any rate

Are quiet souls ; they'll not cut off your head.

Electress. [*Grumbling to herself.*]

"Cut off your head!" That's all they know of England.

Elector. Madam Sister, you are right. These Englishmen

Are treacherous, fierce, like the unstable sea
Caught in perpetual swing of ebb and flow.

"I'll not be Queen of England," quoth the lady,
"Till I've two heads." Sophie, sweet daughter-
ling,

Wilt thou be Queen of England?

Princess. Highness, no,
Not were I hydra-headed. These animals
Would chop me off twenty, spit into their hands
And fall to work on the others.

Electress. Ignorant girl,
Peace! What knowest thou of England?
This my England,
Not fickle, no, nor of a changeable heart,
Nor swift to smite nor timorous in smiting,
She slew her king, majestically slew him.
Less loyal had been less guilty.

Elector. *Diantre*, your Highness! [*Takes snuff.*]
Wonderful woman! This way lies a crown.

Max. In a nettle-bed.

Charles. In a gutter.

Princess. Foul the hands
That are fain of it!

Electress. [*To the PRINCESS.*] Thou'lt not be Queen of
England?

No, for by Heaven that needs a royal heart!

What were it to be Queen of England ? Answer,
Shade of the illustrious dead, answer, Elizabeth !
Were it to pack, distil into one brain
The master-thought of millions, in one bosom
To house a love great as a million loves
And manifold as they ; one word, " My People,"
Being in your mouth, what mother, spouse, child,
lover

Mean upon other lips—your soul's main utterance
And key to your entire life ?

Then comes the reward.

Consider it, women, you whose happiness
Is lightly blown from ephemeral joy to joy,
Maidenhood, beauty, motherhood, ere it fall
Unwinged and spent with half your years. Consider
What 'twere to be a Queen,
A Queen of men, not marketable serfs.
Perchance you lean out from your balcony
One spring day, in the prime and rapture of youth,
And mark the immense crowd billowing beneath,
A sea of worshipping eyes, a ripple of hands
Claiming you theirs, lifting you to the height
Of their hearts' throne—all fathers, lovers, friends,
All yours and yours for ever.

These are the Immortals,
Not to be changed by mutability
Of the inconstant blood, or alienated
By circumstance, or in the unfeeling grave
To slumber careless.

You the years will change,
The small mechanic hours, you will grow old,

Dim-hearted, cinder-grey, will drop your play-
things

One after one—Ay, but on any day
Choose you come forth, outstretching crooked
hands.

Like those youth mocks, whispering with faded
mouth

Such as men scorn, "My People"—and lo, the
Immortals!

A sea of worshipping eyes, a ripple of hands
Claiming you with the old rapture, lifting you
To the height of their hearts' throne, yours as in
youth,

Yours on through age to death, sons, lovers,
friends.

—This were for her that had a queen's heart.

Princess. I

Have a woman's, madam. Truly one man's love,
One honourable love, would more content me
Than all your multitude's.

Max. [*Aside to the PRINCESS.*] Adorable Sophie!

[*To the ELECTRESS.*] Your Queen Elizabeth was a
dry old maid, was she not?

Electress. Boy, you talk like a girl.

Charles. You, mother,

Not like a Stuart. Whose heads have they cut off,
This people?—Stuart heads.

Whom treasonably

Have they despoiled, exiled?—Again your kins-
folk,

Still Stuarts.

The crown's a Stuart's—I'd rather die defending
it

Than live to wear't a usurper.

Elector. Ay, ay, Charles,

Thou speakest well. I also love them not,

These English.

Still, money must be considered.

Thou hast an excellent, shrewd, well-judging
mother :

Respect her, Charles.

[*To the young PRINCE GEORGE*].

Come hither, George, come now to Grandpapa.

Wilt thou be King of England, a rich King

With barrels of gold ?

Young Prince. That I will, Grandpapa !

Elector. What would'st thou do with it ?

Young Prince. Buy beer and wood.

Elector. Wood ? *Donnerwetter !* Why would'st thou
buy wood ?

Young Prince. To burn my books with. Hey, what
a fine bonfire !

We'd all eat pepper-cakes, and drink and drink

Till we were like the Prince, my father.

[*The ELECTOR laughs uproariously.*

Princess.

Chut !

Duchess. *Fi donc !*

Electress. Peace, foolish boy, and mind thy book,
If thou would'st be a King.

Elector. Bah ! they are women.

What do they know of Kings ? But thou and I

Are men. Come, Georgie ! thou and Grandpapa

Shall set the fountain dragons all a-spirt.

There's fun for us !

*[As they begin to move off the terrace the
ELECTORAL PRINCE GEORGE meets
them. He has been drinking.]*

Prince. I don't want you, any of you. I want my
Ermingarda. Where is my Schulenburg ? She
should meet me here on the terrace.

Princess. Highness ! Grandfather ! You hear the
Prince ? *[She bursts into tears.]*

Electress. George, you forget yourself. You also,
Princess.

Elector. *[Going out and pushing the ELECTORAL
PRINCE before him.]* Lout ! Wilt thou never learn
manners ?

*[They all move off the terrace. As they
go out KÖNIGSMARCK and HILDE-
BRAND pass in the garden below,
playing the lute and singing.]*

*Hushed are the houses, the lamps are all sleeping,
But the moon, the white moon is awake.
At eve the spinners tell beside the doorway
Of evil spirits and their accursed love,
Fiercer than hate.*

*[They go further away in the garden.
MADAME PLATEN and ERMINGARDA
VON SCHULENBURG come along the
terrace.]*

E. v. Schulenburg. The Prince is not yet here. Nay,
that is well.

Madame Platen. Ay, for you're well assured the Prince will come.

But the Elector? Where is he? Walking with the Princess!

Toying with his grandson, calling her sweet names,

"Sophiechen," "daughterling"! Ernest Augustus Forgets he has a mistress, one who hath surely Some claim on his attention.

E. v. Schulenburg. Do not fear,
'Tis a most generous prince. You'll not lack money
Madam, whatever happens.

Madame Platen. Money, Ermingarda!
Art thou a sloth, a marmot? Canst not hate,
Not even hate the Princess?

E. v. Schulenburg. [*Eating caramels.*] Why should I hate her?

The Prince does. He loves me.

Madame Platen. But she hates both,
Hates you and me and every day dishonours us
With ignominious terms, indecorous,
Unmeet for noblewomen—concubines,
Harpies, no name so foul but she dare fling it,
The brat of Zell.

E. v. Schulenburg. Pfui! 'Tis her jealousy,
Because the power is ours.

Madame Platen. Ours, Ermingarda,
To-day, but how long ours? The Princess of
Hanover
Is mother of the heir, the sly Frenchwoman's
daughter,

Each day she wins a heart and every heart

She wins, to us means a new enemy.

E. v. Schulenburg. What can she do? The Prince
has all her money.

Madame Platen. Money! Do you desire nothing
but money?

But I would rule, and she robs me of power,
Robs me of everything—O Ermingarda,
I have done well for thee, by how much better
Than for myself! I found thee a brave young
Prince

For a lover girl. Tell me, dost thou not love
him?

Is it not sweet to love?

E. v. Schulenburg. For your good friendship,
Madam, I thank you. Little did my parents,
Good souls, hope to establish their poor daughter,
Their penniless girl thus nobly, for young men
Are grown so mercenary! The Electoral Prince
Is well enough.

Madame Platen. My child, he worships you.
Do you not love him?

E. v. Schulenburg. Love him? Pfui! What's love?
Nonsense, I say.

Madame Platen. You say because you are young.
There'll come at length a time—Dear God! I also
Was young as you are—all, beauty and youth,
All sacrificed, unvalued, lost for this!
How? Shall the brat of Zell, the mock Princess,
Conquer us, girl?

There's not a drop of blood

In all your waxen body ; you cannot hate,
No, nor love either ! But between us two,
Me and my foe, Princess of Hanover,
There is a mortal hate ; it burns, it grows,
It cannot be assuaged unless by ruin,
By death, by triumph, it cannot have an end
Except——

[KÖNIGSMARCK and HILDEBRAND are
heard singing in the garden.

*They ended where a great stone
Like a ruined tower stood alone.
At the blind gate she marked more clearly
The track, for in every step was blood.*

Madame Platen. Hark ! Who is that ?

E v. Schulenburg. 'Tis some young gentlemen

Studying their music.

Madame Platen. O be silent ! Listen !

KÖNIGSMARCK sings.

*She beat at the stone on every side.
"Let me come to my love," she cried ;
"Let me in, for I love him dearly,"
And, "Who is this that hath shed his heart's blood?"*

Madame Platen. That voice ! Ay, surely !

My Ermingarda, I implore of thee go.

Look, tell me who they are singing in the garden.

[SCHULENBURG leans over the balustrade
of the terrace, looking ; KÖNIGS-
MARCK, singing, more in the distance.

*At length deep in the rock one said,
Fiercely shrieking, "My love is dead.
I have killed him, accursed mortal."
Laughing, "And I have avenged him. Go thy way."*

E. v. Schulenburg. 'Tis the handsome Count,
Madam ; it is Königsmarck.

Madame Platen. [*Throwing her arms round SCHULEN-
BURG*]. Ermingarda !

E. v. Schulenburg. Heavens ! What is the
matter with you ?

Madame Platen. I love him.

E. v. Schulenburg. You mean Königsmarck ?

Madame Platen. Ermingarda,
Listen, I entreat. You surely are my friend,
Not thankless, nor a compelled sycophant ;
No, but my friend.

Hold me, embrace me closer !

Yes, I do love him, Philip—Königsmarck.

O brave lips blessed in the utterance !

Philip ! They kiss themselves upon the name.

E. v. Schulenburg. But you have the Elector——

Madame Platen. Yes, I have the Elector !
Old, negligent ; but let her not count upon
him,

My triumphing enemy ! Once I held him bound
In a chain of Love, strong, yet I know a stronger,
A chain to haul such grey leviathans
Out of the middle deep—habit. I hold it,
I hold the Elector.

E. v. Schulenburg. What if he discovered—— ?

Madame Platen. He'll not discover. Well, and if he did ?

You think I dare not win my love, I dare not
Wear Philip on my heart, superbly wear him
For the world to see ?

Dare I not ? Ah, dear God !

E. v. Schulenburg. Madam, let me advise you.

Madame Platen. What do you advise,
Girl ? The continuance of the old routine ?
Managing the Elector, ruling at Monplaisir,
Mistress of the revels, while the entire court
Bows to my pleasure as in a feathery swamp
The reeds bow all the wild way of the wind ?
Power ! Money !

You suppose that having won them,
Having assured them, we are satisfied ?
I thought so, too, at your age. Then I wondered
What 'twas I lacked—and then came Königs-
marck.

E. v. Schulenburg. When might that be ?

Madame Platen. We met upon a journey
On the road to Wiesbaden.

E. v. Schulenburg. What made you love him ?

Madame Platen. Why do you ask ? Your eyes alone
can answer

What is beyond dispute. The envying stars
Say not there is no radiance in the sun,
Neither have any said of Königsmarck
He is not beautiful.

E. v. Schulenburg. His sister Aurora
Is also beautiful. Why does she come here ?

Madame Platen. What's that to me? She cannot be
his lover,

Let her be whose she will. Why does he come here?

Answer me that, Ermingarda.

E. v. Schulenburg. Surely, madam,
You are sufficient cause.

Madame Platen. Dear flattery!

I did imagine it once, I did suppose him
Love's merchantman, dallying with interchange
Of immaterial gauds, till the opportune hour
Come to reveal the whole unpriced treasure
That queens may traffic in.

A dear conjecture,
And false as he who is dearer than all dreams,
And falser than he knows. Without a word,
Suddenly he departed ; unannounced
He has returned, but cold, preoccupied
Like a philosopher. Who has transformed
him ?

What magic altered? Who unqualified
The amorous Königsmarck?

E. v. Schulenburg. Some black Venetian
Met in a mask, her hair dyed red.

Madame Platen. The Princess.

E. v. Schulenburg. The Princess of Prussia? What!
 Consoled already

With a new amour?

Madame Platen. Prussia! Who talked of her?
There's but one princess, one in all the world
For me, my enemy—the Princess of Hanover.

[KÖNIGSMARCK is in the garden with his
back to the terrace, playing on a lute.

MADAME PLATEN advances to the
balustrade, and leans over it.

There's but one man that ever I did weigh
Against a ducat! Put him now in the balance
Against the pearls of the East, an argosy,
Throw monarchs in, even magnificent France
Himself—my Philip, yet thou shouldst outweigh
them!

I love thee; and thou dare'st, thou dare'st love her!
E. v. Schulenburg. Madam, the whole of this is
midsummer madness.

I speak as a friend. If you will accuse the
Princess

Of a lover, find a likelier—one of the Princes,
Not Königsmarck. Madam, your passion for him
Is a ruinous folly, natural in a girl,
But in a woman of your age, experience——

Madame Platen. My age! So thou must taunt me
with my years,
Thou baby-face!

Most true, my Königsmarck,
I bring thee not that bubble filled with fancy,
The heart of a girl, that cold and flimsy bubble;
A wine-red ruby, an orb'd jewel of flame
I bring thee, a woman's heart, Clara von Platen's.

I come to thee
Clothed in the purple of my regnant years,
Crowned with the diadem of men's vain desires,
I bring thee all I am,

Princes my vassals, kings my flatterers—

Would God thou had'st known me

In the old days, when the envious Frenchwomen
Banished me France, when here at Herrenhausen
I played the shepherdess, would thy heart had
been

One of the million then I stole!

Cursed fortune

To have been so wealthy once to buy things
worthless,

Now to stand thus, pitiful, counting my store.

Well, then, I count it! I say it is enough.

Time has not conquered me, but I come con-
quering,

Laden with the spoil of years,

I love thee, Königsmarck. Mine shalt thou be
As certainly as yonder climbing moon
That like a phantom now floats from the earth,
Will shortly triumph, a boss of gold in heaven,
So certainly shall I triumph in thy love.

But look not thou on her,

Never again look thou upon the Princess.

Think'st thou none can observe, none understand?
Those fiery tongues thy looks have no such lan-
guage

Silent to me; I know thou lovest her.

Forget her—or remember her at thy peril,
Thy deadly peril, for by omnipotent God,
Never will I abandon thee

—Königsmarck, the power is mine—

To the arms of her my abhorred enemy.

Dare'st thou yet love her ?

She shall die and thou

Even thou, the young, beloved, adored, thou also
Shalt die—for I will kill thee, Königsmarck.

[KÖNIGSMARCK and HILDEBRAND sing
in the garden below.

*Forth she came with swinging hair,
While the moon in heaven's bare
Rode the vacant pathway showing—*

[PRINCESS OF HANOVER and the DUCHESS
OF ZELL appear at the further end of
the terrace from PLATEN and SCHU-
LENBURG, followed at a distance by
LEONORA V. KNESEBECK, then PRINCE
CHARLES and AURORA approach
KÖNIGSMARCK in the garden below
and speak with him. HILDEBRAND
goes away.

Madame Platen. [looking at AURORA]. The woman
yonder—who is she?

E. v. Schulenburg. Only Aurora.

Yonder's the Princess ; the Prince then will not
come here.

I am going, madam, will you not go with me ?

Madame Platen. If I can find some insult that
pricks deep

I'll stay and meet them.

Eléonore d'Olbreuse !

What's she to be a duchess ?—Nay, I am weary,
My head is heavy. I'll not meet them now,

For nought's to say, except—my curse upon thee,
 Brat of Olbreuse, Princess of Hanover!

[E.V. SCHULENBURG and MADAME PLATEN
*go out. The DUCHESS and the PRIN-
 CESS advance along the terrace.*

Princess. I will not weep. How vain and vain are
 tears!

I would unpitying Death were won with tears,
 Even as compassionate Sleep.

She is worn Sorrow's nurse, whose breathing
 bosom

And quiet arms upgather in the night
 What unassuaged griefs, what hoarse despairs!

She folds them round with rest,
 She washes out all tears and smooths away
 Grief's ugly writing, till the tormented wretch
 Lies peacefully as the child wearied with play.

Nightly she brings
 Her dear reprieve: but the eternal slumber
 To them who ask denies the grand release.

Duchess. My little Sophie! Always so impetuous!
 An eager spirit that must feed full of laughter
 Or drown in misery. Child, I know it of old!
 You exaggerate, my dear, for what in sum
 Makes your despair? Your husband is unfaithful.
 Why, so are thousands, millions of common men,
 Princes invariably.

Princess. Was my father unfaithful?

Duchess. Your father married me for love——

Princess. Not money?
 Dear heaven, had you been ignorant of love!

But no, you two had loved, you had been happy,
'Tis I must pay the price of your ambition.

Duchess. Forgive——

Princess. Thou, mother, needest no forgiveness,
Who never sinned but of necessity.

Duchess. Compelled, I brought thee to an abhorred
bridal,

Yielding thy cherished youth to a house of hate.

Princess. Accursed day!

Duchess. Enough of wasteful grief,
Which blasts thine own dear beauty but con-
founds not

One of our enemies. Nay, rejoice, my daughter,
Because thou hast conquered ancient enmity.

The Electress holds thee dear——

Princess. Or pities me.

Duchess. The Elector prizes thee beyond his mis-
tress,

Who chokes with her own venom.

Princess. [*Laughing.*] Fattens on it.

Visibly, madam.

Duchess. There's my own dear daughter!

Say, my sweet love, is there no pleasure in life?

The fair Princess, the admired queen of hearts,

To whom giddy princes, grave ambassadors

Alike are tributaries—she's my daughter.

Where once I sat scorned and humiliated,

She reigns, enjoying honour.

Child, confess,

If dignity seem to thy youth unprecious—

Yet art thou proud—is not thy woman's triumph

Delightful to thee? Gaiety and laughter,
 Jewels, the dance, hast thou forgot to love them?
Princess. No, madam.

Duchess. Thou'rt as capable of joy,
 As full of merriment as when our madcap
 Made pretty riot about our knees. I know her!
 Thy happiness is not feigned——

Princess. I am often merry,
 I can drink deep of joy, but Happiness——
 Hush! What a sinister word! If any utter it
 At festivals it falls as hollowly
 As when a stone drops echoing down a well,
 Hinting of deep, deep darkness and drowned things
 Far underneath, and phantoms that may rise
 When midnight holds the house, shrouded and pale
 And deadly cold, to haunt with long, long sighs
 And endless iteration of old grief
 The hushed rooms of the heart.

Duchess. What do you mean?
 My child, you are not well, you are not yourself.

Princess. When Pierrot wore his face at carnival time
 They cried, "What a bad mask!"

LEONORA V. KNESEBECK. [*Approaching.*] Pardon me,
 madam,

Yonder Prince Charles comes with Count Königs-
 marck

And his late arrived sister.

[KÖNIGSMARCK and PRINCE CHARLES,
preceded at a little distance by AURORA,
come up the garden below to the ter-
race.

Königsmarck. Charles, she was weeping !

Charles. Only the usual tale; the unmannered beast,

Her husband, flouts her with his Schulenburg.

Königsmarck. Were he not your brother—

Charles. Pray, no delicacy

On that account—

Königsmarck. I'd cut his heart out.

Charles. No !

Princes cannot be fought ; they must be murdered.

That's not my Philip's business.

Königsmarck. Had you known her,

The darling child that I, that every one

Protected ! God ! This mouth has kissed the blood

From her scratched finger whom to-day a villain

Stabs to the heart, and none——

Aurora. [*From the terrace steps.*] I wait for you,

Highness and brother.

Charles. Pardon, most fair lady !

[*They go on to the terrace where the PRINCESS OF HANOVER and the DUCHESS OF ZELL are standing. PRINCE CHARLES presents AURORA to them. They all talk together, walking on the terrace, but presently the PRINCESS and KÖNIGSMARCK stand apart from the others. HILDEBRAND is singing out of sight.*]

HILDEBRAND sings :

*Nothing moved but on the sana
Shadows like a dial hand,*

*Slender shade of feathered sedges,
Broad rock shadows veering under the moon*

*Ere the shadows had moved a span
Waking or sleeping she saw a man,
On the bare and bright sea-edges
A man of Elfland under the moon.*

*Yet the maiden had no fear,
Her seemed she had loved him a long year,
Oft had seen him pale for her kisses,
Often looked on him silent for love.*

Königsmarck. The sunshine on the old grey castlewall,
The autumnal ochre reeds in the blue moat——

Princess. Where in a row ridiculous white ducks
Would stand on their heads—until a pebble hit
them——

Königsmarck. Flung by a certain little hand——

Princess. No, no !

That I deny. I might throw, I hit nothing.

Yours was the stone and yours the ducks and
drakes ;

Ten or a dozen, all along the moat,

You used to make. How I did envy them !

Königsmarck. Once, madam, you contrived—do you
remember ?——

Head over ears, to tumble in.

Princess.

Remember !

Does one forget such things ? How you contrived
To pull me out—there was the miracle !

A boy as you were then——

Königsmarck. Faith, it appeared

One that was bold enough to plunge so deep
And mount so high, a princess in his arms,
Was over-bold. 'Twas then I got my *congé*.

Princess. Surely not so——

Königsmarck. No matter what the offence
Closed up my golden book. Let me be hasty
To seize the opportune moment, since your High-
ness

Deigns to review those dim and minor passages
In her rich memory, which firmly characterized
Stand in my obscure tablets, long perused
Yet nowise worn. Most humbly I beseech her
On the knees of my heart, what is the newer offence
That has estranged now, since I came to Hanover,
One who were else unaltered ?

Princess. Noble Count
If I have failed in courtesy, seemed ungracious,
Impute it to a mind distract——

Königsmarck. Your Highness
Has never failed. Again I ask my offence
—Thus, on my knee.

Princess. My lord, the place is public.
You ask ? A bitter and declared enemy
Fronted me the first hour I came to Hanover,
Into a house of enemies. Well, this woman
Stands yet encamped against me. She is powerful,
Wealthy, while I—I can forgive the herd
Fawning upon her, but when my playfellow,
Friend of my too short years of happiness,
When Königsmarck shoots like an errant star

Once more above the horizon of my world—
I mean when you, Count Königsmarck, appear
As the satellite of that unshamed harlot
Whom I justly abhor, that infamous harpy
Who shares my spoils to pay her hired flatterers,
Why then the shaft strikes deeper.

Königsmarck. Madam, hear me——

Princess. Philip of Königsmarck, is it possible
I can believe that once sincere affection
Stands in the record of your memory ?

Königsmarck. Madam,
You must believe it.

How should I be cognisant
Of your court politics? When I met this lady
By accident, ignorant of her name and country,
I found her fair enough, witty enough
To wile the casual hour. When she invited me
To Hanover, where I had other business,
Perchance I deemed, learning her paramount,
Her friendship serviceable. Yet from the day
I knew her what she was, arch enemy
And infidel where unabandoned pieties
Enjoined me worship, I have shown the Countess
Bare courtesy.

Body of Bacchus! now
I'll talk no more with her. No, may I perish
If I exchange a word——!

Princess. [*Laughing.*] Still so impetuous!
Königsmarck, are you yet a boy?
Who'd suffer
Should you offend grossly this paramount

Lady of Hanover ? Not you, Sir Wanderer,
 Who pitch your gay pavilion here and there,
 Making our capitals mere provinces
 Of an unverged empire ; no, but myself.
 She would divine, or did she not divine
 —Although methinks yon peering moon's her spy—
 Yet should I something lose, losing a friend,
 For we are friends again, are we not ?

Königsmarck. Madam !

Princess. Losing a friend out of a world of enemies.
 Propitiate her then.

Königsmarck. And serve my Sovereign.
 Thus let me seal our pact and my own pardon
 On the same little hand——

Princess. [*To the DUCHESS, who approaches, followed
 by the rest of the party.*] Madam, we have
 quarrelled
 In the old way and have been reconciled.

SCENE II

*A ball-room at the Palace. The ELECTOR and ELEC-
 TRESS, the three younger PRINCES, the PRINCESS
 dressed as Flora in a simple white dress, with
 carnations ; the DUCHESS OF ZELL ; the DUKE OF
 ZELL dancing with MADAME PLATEN, who is mag-
 nificently attired and covered with jewels. The
 FRENCH ENVOY, KÖNIGSMARCK, AURORA, ERMIN-
 GARD V. SCHULENBURG, COUNTESS V. DUDER-
 STADT, BARON V. BLASEWITZ and other courtiers.*

Blasewitz. No, Madam. Pardon me! My reverence for our gracious Electoral family forbids me.

Countess v. Duderstadt. Alas, Baron! None can grieve more than myself at this sad disgrace to our beloved Prince—but what can you expect?

[*Ladies and gentlemen gather round the pair.*]

First Lady. What is it, gracious Countess?

First Gentleman. Who is it, honoured madam?

Second Lady. A scandal, a scandal! Tell us instantly, dear Countess.

Second Gentleman. We have not tasted scandal for forty-eight hours. We are dying.

Countess. My lips are sealed.

First Lady. Is it about the Princess of Prussia and the little dancing-master?

Second Gentleman. You are mightily behind the times, Madam. That was over six weeks ago.

Second Lady. Or about a certain very great person and the Platen's waiting-maid? There was the devil to pay!

Second Gentleman. Ay, but it was the waiting-maid paid him. The Elector——

Countess. No, I thank God I listen to no scandal that concerns any true member of our gracious princely family, any true princess.

First Lady. Then it's the Princess of Hanover!

All. Ah!

First Gentleman. Has she at length rewarded the passion of Prince Max?

Second Lady. Or boxed his ears?

Second Gentleman. Or conspired with him?

Countess. I don't wonder none of you can guess.

All. Gracious Countess! Dear lady! Tell us—
you must indeed.

Countess. *Ma foi!* ladies and gentlemen, I see I must oblige you, since the Baron will not. Yesterday the Electoral Princess, being as so commonly happens——

Baron v. Blasewitz. Indisposed and unable to dine at the princely table——

Countess. A strange sort of indisposition truly, for when our gracious Electress——

Blasewitz. Who is always so amiable, so mild, repairs to the Princess's apartments——

Countess. Where do you think she finds her? In bed?

Blasewitz. No, her Highness was not in bed. I deeply grieve to say that her Highness was——

Ladies and Gentlemen. Where? Where?

Blasewitz. Unheard of! Disgraceful!

First Lady. Where was she?

Countess. On the floor.

Blasewitz. Yes, on her hands and knees.

Countess. Playing with the Electoral children.

First Lady. *Quelle horreur!*

Second Lady. *Est il possible!*

First Gentleman. Monstrous!

Second Gentleman. The floor! It was low, undeniably.

Baron v. Blasewitz. And it is in such manners that the heir of Hanover will be brought up!

First Lady. What was to be expected from such a marriage ?

Countess. Yes, indeed ! The daughter of the French Madame !

Princess of Hanover. [*To the ELECTOR.*]

Your Highness will not dance with me ? You must, Grandpapa !

Elector. Sophie, you are laughing at me.

Princess. Laugh at the Elector ! See, my father's dancing

With the Countess Platen. That's to please you. Highness,

Dance with his daughter to please him.

Elector. Sophiechen,
I have a reason, a most secret reason ;
I cannot dance.

Princess. A secret ? Tell me, Grandpapa.

Elector. Love, I am fat.

Princess. Highness ! Impossible !

Elector. I'll put thee off with a proxy.

Count of Königsmarck,

Approach !

Königsmarck. At your Highness' service

Elector. We command you
To become our deputy, and personating
Most personably ourselves, to lead the Princess
Forth to the dance.

Königsmarck. Highness, I am all obedience
And gratitude for undeserved honour.

[*To the PRINCESS.*] Madam, I await the moment——

[*He bows and withdraws.*]

Max. Honoured Father,
Are there not princes here, young, personable——
Elector. And damnable bad dancers. Keep your
breath

To cool your porridge, when you get it.

Princess. *Max,*

I'll dance with thee one day.

Max. Now that's a promise.

Electress. You amaze me, gracious Prince! Truly,
odd couples

You have contrived! To choose your princely son
Were more conformable——

Elector. To etiquette.

Potztausend, Madam! Are you such a Christian

You'll not allow me vex my Platen, eh?

Our Countess meant to dance with Königsmarck,

I know it. Well, he dances to perfection——

And Sophie has him. How that child does laugh!

Pretty, i' faith!

Electress. H'm.

French Envoy. [*Talking to the PRINCESS and the
DUCHESS OF ZELL.*] —Dream I'm in Paris.

Parisian wit, Parisian elegance

Shine where you move. I could almost believe

I had dined to-day. Ah, me! In Germany

One never dines.

Duchess. One stuffs,

Princess. With long solemnity.

French Envoy. Lady, for you enchanting Ganymede

Hath served his honey from Olympian flowers.

Young beautiful Bacchus, fresh as when he found

Ariadne, nothing dark, nothing mysterious
Shadowing his amorous eyes, hath pressed a
vintage

For you with divine hands, ere he uplifted
His delicate, shining cup. What should you eat
Or drink at our gross banquets ?

Princess. Goose, my lord,
Beer, sauerkraut, sausages——

French Envoy. Hold, hold, assassin !
Their very names murder me. Pardon, ladies,
I have detained you.

[*He goes to speak to MADAME PLATEN,
who has finished dancing.*]

Duchess. Is Flora so enamoured
Of her own beauty ? Or when she laughs in a
mirror

Is it for other eyes, more circumspect,
Or, as is very probable, unallured ?

Princess. Madam ?

Duchess. The Elector chooses Platen's lover——

Princess. No !

Duchess. But I say she owns it—out of malice
To be your cavalier. 'Twill much amaze him,
Ay, and chagrin, to see his darling daughter
Ogling the fortunate swain—Platen and she
Pulling caps before the court for the same gallant.
How all the world will smile !

Königsmarck. [*Approaching.*] Highness, permit me.
I hear the summoning music.

[*The PRINCESS, haughtily and in silence,
accepts his hand, and they dance.*]

A Gentleman. The Princess looks her loveliest.

Another Gentleman. Beautiful

In pure simplicity !

Mesbach. Bah ! Affectation !

Second Lady. She would be pretty were she not a Princess.

Her Daughter. Mother, our jewels are nought. I'll wear carnations

And a white dress another day : they're perfect.

What a splendid cavalier ! Is he a prince,

Madam ?

Second Lady. No, but a Swede, wealthy and noble,
Handsome enough. Look not so long upon him,
He is a snare for eyes—the Countess Platen
Cannot remove hers from him.

Daughter. Out upon her !

She is as old as you.

Platen. [*To the FRENCH ENVOY.*] An exquisite dancer !

French Envoy. For a hyperborean, one who hath not visited

Versailles, the temple of Terpsichore. Surely,

Madam, you remark in him a certain roughness—

A grace, an air, in brief, a something French

Wanting ?

Platen. Your women would find nothing wanting
In Königsmarck.

French Envoy. Truly he and the Princess
Are a porcelain pair, shepherd and shepherdess.
Forgive me, beauteous lady, if my preference
Lean to an ampler grace, and contemplating
Your shape, your dress—a miracle of taste

Mid travesties of toilettes—I am impatient
Of all but pure Parisian, that's yourself.

Platen. Out, flatterer !

First Lady. [*To PLATEN.*] Madam, Count Königsmarck
Is handsomer than ever !

Third Lady. What a dancer !

That pink and silver suit him to perfection.

Princess. [*To KÖNIGSMARCK, with whom she is dancing.*]
Count Königsmarck,

You held my hand too long ; observe the music.

Platen. [*Aside to SCHULENBERG.*]

O, but my heart will burst !

I am enraged beyond measure with the Elector.

Is he mad to give Königsmarck to the Princess ?

Schulenberg. No, but he is jealous.

Platen. That for his jealousy !

She shall not have him, not though the fool Elector

Thrust him into her arms. I'll choose damnation

Rather than yield him. Child, what will you wager ?

My diamonds, girl—I am primed to dare the devil—

Against your necklet, Königsmarck is mine,

Mine before morning.

Schulenberg. But I love not wagers,

Because they are never certain.

Platen. This one shall be.

The Electress. [*To PRINCE CHARLES.*]

I want no coward son, yet be persuaded,

Charles, here's no place for honourable swords.

Enough the Emperor has his Hanoverians,

Bought by the hundred ; shall a prince, a brave
one,

Ay, and a dear, be thrown him at a bargain,
To complete the tale ?

Charles. Mother, I would be gone.

The Elector is unjust—not even contented
With having robbed us of the inheritance,
He grudges at us. I'll build myself a throne
Of savage scimitars, or else I'll take them
In my appeased heart.

In truth I am sorry
Königsmarck will not join, a tried soldier
And an approved friend. Persuade him, Madam,
To go with me, for I am irrevocably
Fixed to depart.

*[While he is speaking KÖNIGSMARCK
approaches, conducting the PRINCESS
to her seat. The ELECTRESS beckons
them to her.]*

Electress. *[Indicating CHARLES.]* My daughter, all
our prayers,

Our prodigal persuasions, here fall barren.
Charles will go fight the Turks. God knows why
fight 'em,

For none of us do. I am but his mother—
Have you no eloquence to turn his purpose ?

Princess. All is exhausted, Madam, the Prince is
adamant.

Electress. Then turn it elsewhere.

Count of Königsmarck,
Since our dear son, the well-beloved brother
Of a Princess to whom former benefits
And honourable friendship make you bounden,

Since he will go upon this dangerous business,
 We pray you, a man older, more war-experienced,
 Hardier than he, to accompany our prince.
 Reap laurels for yourself, assist his youth
 To reap them too, and above all, Königsmarck,
 Bring him safe home again.

Königsmarck. [To the PRINCESS.] Do I understand,
 Highness, you join yourself to this requirement?

Princess. I do, my lord.

Königsmarck. The more must be my sorrow,
 Electoral Highnesses, that my private business
 Renders it difficult, I may say impossible,
 To obey commands which should command obe-
 dience.

I have reasoned with Prince Charles, implored,
 upbraided,

Bidding him wait till the fierce torch of war,
 Which smokes yet unextinguished, fire again
 Flanders or the Palatinate. There's a school!
 What should a man learn of the Turk? And now
 What laurels grow on the waste Grecian hills?
 He knows my mind and my heart also.

Prince,

Let these illustrious ladies govern you.
 Let them dismiss the Envoy of haughty France—
 Yon oily-tongued rogue with the red on his cheek—
 And bid us march against her.

Princess. How? Against France?

Electress. Nay, my good Count, if that be your con-
 dition

'Tis one beyond our power.

Königsmarck. Pardon me, Princess,
And you, august lady, my pledged word
Being inviolable, I am scrupulous
In pledging it.

Electress. You have permission, sir,
To retire.

[*To CHARLES.*] Your friend smacks of the savage
North—

Esau, in a smooth Italian Jacob-skin.

Charles. 'Tis a mettled courser. He who'd manage
Königsmarck.

Must bear light on the rein.

French Envoy. [*To the PRINCESS.*] Exquisite lady,
They who admire you here are yet inconscient
Of half they should admire.

Dame! This was dancing!
Would I could once emparadise mine eyes
Watching your highness and our unparalleled
King

Dance at Versailles!

Aurora. [*To KÖNIGSMARCK.*] God grant I may be
angry!

Königsmarck. What do you mean?

Aurora. There's nothing so becomes
A Königsmarck as anger. Philip, my compliments!

You are exceeding handsome.

Königsmarck. What? Damnation!
Your pardon, sister, I am a mere Northman,
One that was never apt to fawn and smile
Where he has had offence.

Aurora. Who has offended you ?

Königsmarck. The Electress.

Aurora. How, dear brother ?

Königsmarck. She commands

As easily as 'twere a ball-room compliment—
 "Pick up my fan," or "Hand my scent-bottle,"
 "Go to the Morea." I am not her subject,
 No, nor the Elector's hired mercenary,
 Following the honourable art of war
 As 'twere a trade. I am a gentleman,
 And one that very hardly owns allegiance
 To any King who crosses him——

Aurora. Ay, infidel !

One that will play the courtier to crowned
 heads

And yield them courtly reverence just so long
 As they shall not draw on your complaisance
 As it were piety. That's your complexion—
 At least, I know 'tis mine.

Königsmarck. Truly, Aurora,

I think it is.

Aurora. Yet my impetuous brother,

Our shrewd Electress may have excellent reasons
 For wishing you in the Morea, at Kamschatka,
 Anywhere, in short. Your visits to the Princess
 Pass unobserved of the world, you being accom-
 panied

Always by a young Prince of known devotion
 To her. But something by the mind's finger and
 thumb

Not to be caught a moment, something impalpable

As air and full as real, may be perceptible
To this old, hard, well-judging woman.

Königsmarck.

What ?

Aurora. You adore the Princess, she——

Königsmarck. [*Laughing bitterly.*] Say that she loves
me !

Aurora. I wonder that she should. What women
see——!

Königsmarck. Love ? That capricious, haughty,
cold coquette !

True she has called me “friend,” has let her gaze
Melt in my own an instant : that was Wednesday.
To-night she treats me like a dog. By Heaven,
I’ll make no woman’s pastime, were she Empress
Of the Indies !

I have been the fool of dreams

And they are right who mock me. Laugh, Aurora !

Aurora. I beg her pardon. I believed her Highness
A kind of simpleton. I see ’tis otherwise,
She’ll fight the duel through. An easy victory
Makes an unvalued triumph.

Königsmarck.

There’s your cant !

What triumph, what victory, what duel is here ?

I held my heart for her in the bare truth
Of entire love, desiring she should take it
Without a price, without a recompense,
Without a word, so it might comfort her.
This heart as plainly, in the high simplicity
Of an immortal soul, she should have taken
Or left.

A curse on women ! I believed

One of them free from the world's hateful shrewd-
ness

And dull diplomacy, Here I abjure such faith
And arm for the duel. If women challenge
me

Let them expect the worst and if they can
Revenge it.

Madame Platen. [*Approaching.*] Count, you have
outshone yourself!

Not Flora, no, nor Venus' self were worthy
To tread the dance with Königsmarck.

Königsmarck. [*Bowing.*] Fair Countess—!

Yet Venus did abandon Königsmarck
To-night for a weightier cavalier. By Venus,
It was unkindly done!

Platen. Eternal chaos
Devour the god that wrought it! Venus wept.
Nay, but I mean this merely mortal Clara,
Unworthy of divine honours.

Königsmarck. Great Mars
Himself would deem here was his Paphian love,
And dead Adonis, might he live again,
Marvel at his own coyness.

Platen. Flatterer!
Yet not Adonis to his divine lover
Was colder, Königsmarck, than you to a friend.
Well, we play high at Monplaisir. Young gentle-
men

Of a prudent disposition do avoid us,
Having emptied a purse or two——

Königsmarck. Body of Bacchus!

I am not such. I'll treble all your stakes
To-night if you will——

Platen. Oh, 'tis a revel to-night!

God knows what you would think——

Königsmarck. For what do you take me?

A puling girl?

Platen. You have a girl's complexion.

Königsmarck. My looks belie my age and disposition,

If you speak truth. To-night, then, at Monplaisir.

Platen. Nay, softly, in your ear. Not at Monplaisir.

To-night we sup at the Castle behind the Mill,

I and some intimates. Do you know the place?

An old, grey, solitary tower, private

And homely. There after these chill Court-cere-
monies

Do we assemble and thaw our frozen spirits,

Play high, drink deep like lords, and dance like
peasants.

You will come?

Königsmarck. Madam, my sister and her lady

Rode hither in my coach——

Platen. Let them return

Without you. Come! I am alone in mine

And frightened in the dark.

Königsmarck. I will be with you.

Platen. [*Aside to SCHULENBURG.*]

What did I say? If Königsmarck is mortal

I win—I win—I win!

Schulenburg. But not my necklet.

I would not take your wager. Hush! They are
going.

[The Electoral party go out, followed by the rest of the Court.]

Platen. *[To KÖNIGSMARCK.]* Shall we go?

Königsmarck. *[Offering his hand.]*

To the Castle behind the Mill!

[They go out laughing. The hall is left empty except for lacqueys, who begin putting out the lights. HILDEBRAND comes in looking for KÖNIGSMARCK'S lute, which is left in a corner of the hall. He takes it up and sings. The lights are put out one by one as he leaves the hall singing.]

*Suddenly her heart began
To beat, for she saw the steps of a man.
Trembling from the ground she caught her
And followed them along the lonely sand.*

*They ended where a great stone
Like a ruined tower stood alone,
At the blind gate she marked more clearly
The track, for in every step was blood.*

SCENE III

The PRINCESS'S apartment, with windows opening on to a balcony. PRINCE MAX, AURORA VON KÖNIGSMARCK and other ladies and gentlemen sitting and standing round the window and in the balcony. KÖNIGSMARCK, haggard and carelessly dressed,

leaning over the balcony. The PRINCESS within the room, half reclining on a couch. LEONORA VON KNESEBECK at her side. The noise of an assembling crowd comes up from below.

Aurora. If we had desired to hear a lying-match between cheap-jacks, pedlars, and quack doctors, we had better have gone to Heidelberg Fair. No! Never again will I take a seat at a play where a prince is chief actor, for though he come an hour by the clock after he is called, we may not so much as throw a nut at him.

Prince Max. From hands so fair as yours, Madam, my brother would esteem even a nut a favour.

Aurora. But the gipsy's ape down there would esteem it a favour from any one's. Poor beast! See how he runs on three hands, and begs with the other and his tail!

A Young Lady. And shall we see Prince Charles at the head of all his soldiers?

Prince Max. No, my child, they will show us only the ones that are fit to be shown. My brother is taking the ugliest men in Germany with him to frighten the Turks. That is why Monsieur de Königsmarck and I are not going.

Königsmarck. *Diantre*, Prince! How do you know Monsieur de Königsmarck is not going?

Prince Max. Because you have a loose garter, a soiled ruffle, and your cravat awry. This is the trim of a lover, but it is not one my father would suffer in a Hanoverian soldier.

Königsmarck. I do not dress to please you or any other prince.

Prince Max. No, nor princess either—but to please the young, the fair, the virtuous lady of Monplaisir.

A Lady. And of the Castle behind the Mill.

Enter PRINCE ERNEST.

Prince Ernest. Ladies and gentlemen, if you are not tired of waiting yet you will be presently. There is some delay, God knows what, and Prince Charles bids me tell you it will be another hour before the troops will be ready to march. Meantime I would have you know there is a Frenchman here with the prettiest performing dogs that ever I saw; and if you will do me the favour to come to my apartments, where they now are, I promise you shall weep for laughing. And so you will come weeping, as it is very proper you should, to bid farewell to our gallant brother and his gentlemen. [*Aside to the PRINCESS.*] Sister, Charles desires one more word with you before he leaves, and would not find you with company.

Prince Max. Well thought on, boy! To the dogs, to the dogs! Sister, you must come too. This will be a cure for the *migraine*.

Princess. I thank you, brother, I will stay here. I am not well.

Prince Ernest. Indeed you do look exceeding pale. You were best left in peace. Gracious ladies, noble gentlemen, I invite the whole company to my apartments.

SCENE IV

*The same. The PRINCESS on the couch. LEONORA
VON KNESEBECK.*

Leonora. [With solicitude.] Madam, can I do nothing?

Princess. Nothing, Leonora.

[LEONORA retires to an embroidery frame, and works. KÖNIGSMARCK enters unannounced and stands beside the door. The PRINCESS opens her eyes, sees him, then starts up on the couch.]

Princess. You here? What do you want, my lord?

Königsmarck. A jewel

I have lost, Madam.

[LEONORA rises and goes on to the balcony, as though seeking for the jewel. KÖNIGSMARCK remains standing by the door.]

Königsmarck. [Suddenly.] By Heaven, I want no jewel!

I want one word of pardon.

Princess. Pardon, Count?

You sin, but who would dare affirm you sin
Against me?

Königsmarck. I could answer all my sins,
The ignoble common sins of all my life
Were against you.

There's answer more immediate.

You have an enemy: being ignorant of it,

I was her friend.

You have a mortal enemy. I—O treason

Mortal beyond her hate!—I am her lover.

Princess. Is this your news, my lord?

Why, it is old, older than yesterday.

Königsmarck. Yesterday? Older than a hundred years.

Were we not friends before?

Princess. Perchance we were.

Well-counselling Time brings us considered changes.

You do wisely,

Having to choose between my crowned nullity

And her substantial power, to set your fortune

Where it may most abound.

Sir, you do wisely.

I am a shadow, not a woman, a slave,

Or God knows what, for if I were a woman—

Young fair women

Are loved when first men marry them, but I

Was always hated.

It seems you have no affection for me. Well,

Why should you have? My father does not love me,

Or even pity now. Yet you remember

Formerly he adored me.

My very mother has denied me mercy

And God and man alike are grown incapable

Of care for one made a mysterious outcast

From those deep laws and charities of love,

Which do protect our souls.

Farewell, my lord :

It is most natural that you also leave me.

Königsmarck. Madam—dear lady—

Pray you, most dear lady, be comforted.

Some of us have done ill. The unworthy Prince—

We are all unworthy—yet there's Charles, your
brother,

And the Elector favours you——

Princess.

The Elector

Is clay in Platen's hand : ay, the same Platen

Who is your mistress too.

Königsmarck.

Highness, have mercy——

Princess. Mock me not with the terms of royalty—

Her prisoner !

I only asked reprieve.

The smart of wrong, the sleepless haunting passion

And ever-during madness of my misery,

Make me to fear. I ask a moment's shelter

From the storm and driving ruin of my soul ;

The anodyne of an old quiet castle,

Home and familiar things.

But the wise, good Platen

Counsels I shall not go—and she's omnipotent.

She'll not consent I breathe an instant air

Untainted by her presence, live one hour

Forgetful of her and her friends.

What make you,

Königsmarck, here with me ? Go, you have
chosen,

You have done wisely, you are prudent.

Königsmarck.

No !

I am a monster, but not prudent, no !
 A madman happier bound and scourged with iron
 Than free to his own madness.

Say I am infamous,
 But never say of Königsmarck, "he was wise."

Princess. What else ? You love this woman ?

Königsmarck. Platen ? Gods !

Have we a star in heaven ? Mine when I met
 her

Put out the unprized lamp, and some pale candle,
 Some corpse-light wanderer of infected marshes,
 Drew on my destiny.

Princess. Yet you are Platen's lover.
 I cannot understand.

Königsmarck. Do not, my Princess.
 Yet could you understand ! O for some word
 Sharper than knives, more strong than forked
 lightning

That tears the iron heart of the oak, so might I
 Show you my naked soul, and you forever
 Must apprehend it yours !

There's no such word,
 Only such syllables as men have lied with
 From immemorial time, and credulous women
 Have brought into contempt.

I'll not defend myself.

I would die for you and know you'll not believe it.

Princess. Königsmarck, have you no excuse, no
 explanation ?

O speak, and I will hear you !

Königsmarck. Shall I speak ?

Then 'tis yourself, your all but perfect self
And the one blot on your brightness I accuse.
You are capricious past all privilege
Of womankind, your moods are more inconstant
Than the chameleon's colour, more deceiving
Than April sun, the sharp wind's playfellow.

Your kindness
Made me half worthy of it, legions of angels
Encompassed me in your fair smiles; but suddenly
Frowns, undeserved contempt—Hell was my portion,
And devils came and ministered.

Princess. I am capricious, proud, most blameworthy.

Königsmarck. I said so?

Princess. It is true.

Königsmarck. O what a villain!

A shameless villain, to accuse your light offences,
Dust in the balance where my heaped sins
Weigh down the scales of Heaven. Do not forgive me,
Never pardon me.

[*The PRINCESS is weeping, KÖNIGSMARCK kneels beside her and kisses her hands. PRINCE CHARLES has entered, and stands looking at them.*

Charles. Never on your life!

Put enmity, calumnious words, revenge
Between you, but not pardon.

To whom shall I speak?

Which of you entreat, saying, "Forbear to ruin

One whom I love so well ? ”

Königsmarck, my sister has no consolation
For all her sad youth, loveless, uncherished,
But innocence.

She has no arms against her mortal enemy
But innocence,

No spell to hush her own unquiet spirit
But quiet innocence.

Königsmarck. My Prince, you are in error, you
wrong her Highness.

Princess. Brother, I protest——

Charles. Away with protestations !

I speak to you as a dying man, for certainly
I think I never shall return. The needle
Is drawn to the Pole, and I am drawn as surely
To some unvisited place my star looked down on
When I was born, saying, “Thou shalt have his
blood.”

Princess. Alas, dear Charles !

Charles. The time is very short.

I brought you hither, Königsmarck, I bid you
For friendship's sake, and for love's sake, depart.
Look, I speak plainly. Leave this honoured lady,
Your love dishonours, this unhappy woman
Your consolations kill.

Princess. Brother, how wildly
Do you mistake, imagining this man loves me
Who is the Platen's lover.

Charles. Ay, that reptile,
That beast of fierce embrace and venomous mouth
Hangs coiled about him ; your most deadly danger.

For rather would she kill you, Philip, much rather
 Shatter the huge earth like a ball of glass
 To pluck you from its centre, pull down kingdoms
 To crush your love under the enormous wreckage,
 Than loose you to her enemy. She is fatal
 If Fate herself were other.

Königsmarck. Sir, not falsely
 You judged, pronouncing that I love this lady.
 I have loved her all my life, and dare to say so
 Now that she'll not believe it. Nevertheless,
 I come to bid farewell, I have determined
 To march with you to the Morea. This resolve
 I have made within an hour.

Charles. Philip, my friend,
 Well done! At last, well done!

Königsmarck. I will rejoin you
 In two days' time.

Charles. Nay, the resolve was sudden,
 As sudden be fulfilment. Hildebrand
 Can follow with your gear, ay, Hildebrand
 Knows all that you need—but do you, Philip,
 To horse and ride with me.

Königsmarck. Madam—farewell.

Princess. You will go instantly?

Königsmarck. Highness—farewell.

Charles. Adieu, my sister,
 Heaven be your help, angels your comforters.
 I have loved you well.

Princess. Brother, sweet brother, adieu! God speed
 you both!

Königsmarck—sir, adieu.

Leonora. Dear Highness, my lord Count,
Heaven prosper you !

Charles and Königsmarck. Ladies, all thanks. Farewell.

[PRINCE CHARLES *and* KÖNIGSMARCK
go out.

SCENE V

The same. The PRINCESS and LEONORA v. KNESEBECK.

Leonora. Loss on the heels of loss, grief upon grief !

Princess. Hush, Leonora !

All those black-winged sorrows

That preyed upon my heart, in a flight are gone.

Philomel sits there

Piercing the dark with strong melodious cries

A triumphing grief

More exquisite than all sharp visible joys

That revel up the blue.

[*A silence during which the noise of the crowd without increases. There is a sound of marching, words of command, and military music. LEONORA goes on to the balcony.*

Leonora. [*Returning.*]

Platen and the Elector, coming hither !

Princess. [*Hastily rising.*]

Some Barbary water for my eyes ! The rouge !

Quick, child ! Pin up these curls—the Alençon
lace !

Tire me thus carelessly, 'twill lend a shadow
To hide the stain of weeping. Dost thou come
To witness my despair? Come, Jezebel!

*Enter the ELECTOR and MADAME PLATEN, accompanied
by ladies and gentlemen.*

Elector. Give you good day, Highness!
How goes it, daughterling? What? Sickly,
sadly?

Diantre! but every prince goes once to the wars,
And why not Charles? Do him a world of good.
Do you want a man at mother's apron-string
The whole of his life? Do you or don't you, eh?
That's what I say to the Electress. She's a-bed,
Lest folks should see her weep.

Madame Platen. The Princess of Hanover
Is public in her grief.

Princess. For what cause, Madam,
Should I conceal it?

Elector. [*Stepping into the balcony.*]

Ladies, a brave show,
And will be braver presently.

Madame Platen. [*To the PRINCESS.*]

In your ear, Madam,
The world—be assured I do not credit it—
But the scandalous world whispers your brother
Charles

Loves you much more than brotherly.

Princess. Your world
Of Monplaisir. Did I concern myself,
My world and I, with all the scandalous comments

Of yours, I must become like a waxen image
 Carried at my burial—nor yet avoid them.
 Truly the princes, all save one, do love me.
 Poor fortuneless gentlemen! What would you
 with them
 At Monplaisir?

Madame Platen. Madam, I say your grief
 Is too great for the circumstance. I warn you,
 Being experienced, as an elder sister might——

Princess. An elder, truly.

Madame Platen. Pfui! your easy jibe!
 I keep no calendar, my years are counted
 On a rosary of lovers' vows, and verily
 It has lately lengthened.

[A loud burst of military music from without.]

Elector. Hasten, ladies! Hither!

*[All crowd to the balcony and the window.
 The PRINCESS remains at the back
 of the party, somewhat within the
 window. There is a sound of
 marching, the rattle of arms, cheers
 and music.]*

Elector. Ay, my stout Hanoverians! There be
 soldiers!

Clockwork upon the march, stubborn in battle.
 Look at their uniform! That's worth the money
 The Emperor paid for the lot. Hang 'em, they're
 cheap.

I put the price too low. Yonder's Prince Charles,
 A brave boy when all's said—my son.

Madame Platen. Your Highness,
The House of Hanover breeds heroes.

Elector. Soldiers.

A Lady. Königsmarck rides with him.

Madame Platen. Not Königsmarck!

Elector. 'Tis he. A sudden freak—the Prince desired it

And the Electress, therefore I gave permission.

He goes with the Prince.

Madame Platen. He accompanies his Highness
To the coast?

Elector. He sails with him for the Morea.

Madame Platen. For the Morea? Königsmarck?
Impossible!

Elector. I say the Morea. He is young, adventurous—

Yielded awhile perhaps to women's tears,

Now takes the key of the fields. [*Taking snuff.*

Upon my soul,

I admire him for't.

Madame Platen. I tell you it is senseless,

Incomprehensible, mad!

Give me my mantle!

Here's cold that freezes to the marrow.

[*Returns to the room and draws the*
PRINCESS *aside.*

You!

Your doing! You send Königsmarck to the
war,

Without one word, one farewell, you remorselessly
Doom him to die, to punish me——

Princess. Peace, Madam.

For shame! What influence have I on your
friends?

Your loves do not concern me.

 Silence! The Elector
Observes your conduct.

ACT II

SCENE I

The Hall of Knights in the Leine Palais. A large fireplace with a chimney-piece supported by carved figures of Knights. A door opening into a corridor which leads to the PRINCESS OF HANOVER'S apartments. The ELECTRESS sitting beside the fire, BARONESS V. HEINEBURG in attendance. Enter LEONORA V. KNESEBECK.

Electress. The Princess is awake ?

Leonora. Madam, her slumber
Is deep as death. For many months her bed
Has been a place of tears, of moaning dreams
Nothing might dispossess. Now some three hours
She has lain in a motionless slumber, unprepared,
Fallen upon her couch. I dare not waken her
And could not if I would.

Electress. Let her sleep, Knesebeck.

[*LEONORA goes out.*]

Ah, youth, youth, youth ! Such is thy privilege.
Poignant and long the anguish, but in the end
The physician finds thee. All our consolations,
Our anxious care, our pity are for thee,
Not for incurable, aged woe, irretrievable,
Naked loss.

O wisdom of the world, blinder than justice,
More to be praised, thou verily judgest well,
Leaving things remediless where Life and Nature
Leave them, to the obliteration of slow time
And quiet cure of Death.

Baroness. Your Highness' malady
Creeps from the body to the spirit. Madam,
Though you have lost a son, yet excellent princes
Remain to serve you and your country.

Electress. Mine ?
My country is that England whose high throne
My blood, having no lower spring, aspired to
And must no more aspire. The child of Denmark
Lives to inherit folly——

Baroness. And a throne
Bloody and perilous. The Electoral diadem
Well won, well worn, outshines the flawed splendour
Of England's crown.

Electress. Peace, my poor Heineburg,
You chatter ignorantly.

Baroness. A score of years
I have served your Highness, nor have been found
unfaithful
Or any way unworthy; but the Princess of Hanover
Whom once you did abhor, is the sole creature
Whose comfort now pleases you.

Electress. 'Tis her sorrow
Pleases me. We have much endured together
In long suspensive months, when others easily
Hoped, having little on the die. The anguish
Of the alternating news, he lives—he lives not !

Baroness. And still may be a prisoner.

Electress. I believe

My son is dead.

Enter PRINCE ERNEST.

Ernest. Where is the Electress ?

Electress. Here.

Son, you bear news—'tis of your brother. Speak it
Immediately.

Ernest. My dearest, honoured mother,
Call up your resolution.

Electress. Charles is dead.

Ernest. Fallen in the front of battle, as became him,
Him and our illustrious House. I pray of Heaven
To die no worse.

Electress. Ay, thus it was reported,
And then another rumour. I'll have no rumours,
But certainty.

Ernest. Madam, a broken remnant
Of our destroyed army, landing at Venice,
Despatched a courier ; but out-posting him
A gentleman, one that our Charles affectioned,
Königsmarck, has arrived.

Electress. So ! Let him enter.

[LEONORA VON KNESEBECK *enters while*
PRINCE ERNEST *is speaking. He goes*
out and returns immediately with
KÖNIGSMARCK, *who is in a riding-*
dress. He kneels and kisses the
ELECTRESS'S *hand.*

Königsmarck. Your pardon, Highness !

Electress. For what offence, my lord ?
Königsmarck. That I unworthy live, while one so
noble

Hidden among the hills. They stealing down
To the battle-field, brought back the Prince's
body

And there interred it. Madam, he sleeps well.
A priest hath blest his bed, holier in nakedness
Than robed prelates, the broader benediction
Of the watching hills that wait the gradual
stars,

Holding their silence all the day, is o'er him,
And the sweet spare grey thyme.

For sentry in that mountain solitude
The brown shepherd stands leaning on his staff,
A motionless bronze: nothing appears to live
Except the climbing sheep. Thus I beheld it
Under the broad clear eye of the March morn,
And bade his rest farewell.

Electress. You have brought nothing
That was my son's?

Königsmarck. Highness, a lock of hair.
[*He draws out a folded handkerchief
containing a lock of PRINCE
CHARLES'S hair and gives it to the
ELECTRESS.*]

Leonora. Alas, dear Prince!

Electress. Ever the dearest and the best are taken.

Baroness. A prince beloved by all that looked on
him!

Electress. [To KÖNIGSMARCK.] You have our thanks
for these last offices.

Pardon me, Sir, I cannot think of much—
I would say more—but I am ill. Your arm,

Ernest. [*She rises unsteadily.*] Attend me to my chamber, Baroness,
You also, Knesebeck——

[*The ELECTRESS goes out supported by PRINCE ERNEST and attended by the two ladies. KÖNIGSMARCK leans by the hearth, in the shadow of the chimney-piece. Twilight is falling. The PRINCESS OF HANOVER enters hastily.*

Princess. Where is the Electress ?

[*She advances, looking round her.*

Leonora !—What, all dark ?

How long you have let me sleep !

Königsmarck. [*To himself.*] Dear God ! Herself !

[*He steps out from the shadow of the chimney-piece. The PRINCESS gazes at him in silence, pressing her hand to her forehead.*

Princess. No, it is not a dream, neither is it madness.

I have demanded this with incantations

Of deep heart-stirring groans and urgent whispers

In the black void of midnight.

Shall I now be afraid ?

[*To Königsmarck.*] Yea, I have summoned thee, I
have obtained thee,

Dragged thee at length out of the abyss, perchance

Disturbed thy rest—but O I had no rest !

I longed so much to say, “ I pardon thee,”

To say, “ I—” but what art thou, Königsmarck ?

Do I dream ? Art thou yet living ?

Königsmarck. [*Falling on his knee.*] My — my Princess!

Princess. Thou livest—thou yet livest?

Königsmarck. [*Rising.*] And Charles is dead.

Princess. They told me Charles and all his officers
Were dead. Forgive me, I am mad with grief—
I take you for Count Königsmarck.

Königsmarck. I am he,
Touch me, I am a living man.

Why do you tremble
And fear this flesh who did not fear to summon
The unbodied ghost? I am he thou didst demand,
Compel from the vague bound and portal of Death
Back to the unquiet world.

Ay, it was thou!
What wouldst thou of me? Speak to the re-
turned spirit

Here, in a narrow space, 'twixt life and death
Where we are poised a moment, unabiding
As thistle-down, as foam that winds of the sea
Drive ineluctably on.

Utter what is in thy heart, or being silent
Never again either in flesh or spirit,
Living or dead, in the false antic day
Or true obscure night, call thou on Königsmarck,
For never will he come.

Princess. Ill didst thou do, O thou didst pierce my
heart!

But I have pardoned thee a million times
And washed thee white with tears.

Königsmarck. My blood should pay them,

Drop after drop. Yet hast thou more to say—
 "I pardon thee, I——" ?

Princess. Love thee, Königsmarck.

Königsmarck. Child, thou adored child !

Is it possible ? Dost thou indeed love me ?

Some day thou wilt be sorry.

Princess. Now I defy my fate, I have spoken this
 once—

Philip, I love thee.

It bursts out of my dark and hidden heart
 More sudden, dear and fresh than the first flowers
 Break from the wintry earth—

How I do love thee !

Surely 'tis sweet to hear, being to utter
 Immeasurably sweet.

Königsmarck. So dear a word, so wonderful and rich

Past all imagined utterance, so angelical

Thou dost appear an angel speaking it ;

Yet here devils will answer

And tongues of Hell echo it about the world.

Princess. I did believe you loved me——

Königsmarck. Do my pulses

Beat in the accustomed places ? Do I breathe ?

I have loved you all my life, so dearly well,

So much that were your words each mortal daggers

I'd take them in my heart and die rejoicing,

My blood singing your beauty.

Were we a dream, canopied by dim night,

I should go mad with rapture hearing you

And wake myself with weeping ; but all's true

And a frosty fear——

Princess. How, Königsmarck?—a fear?

Königsmarck. Because I cannot fear or man or devil

I am afraid. Love, I shall be your ruin.

Princess. Ah no, no, no! Only this once

Shall I talk with you of love ; never again

In all the lapse of time. We have much to say,

We who have waited so long, we who have wasted

Inestimable hours. One perilous moment

Wherein all must be told or pass unuttered,

Ungessed, unmourned down the deep gulf of
Time !—

Yet I say nothing, and thou'lt never know

How well I could have loved thee had my stars

Been pitiful.

Königsmarck. Give me your hands, your eyes—

What need of utterance ?

I drink deep draughts of shining love.

Come hither,

[*Drawing her before the hearth.*

Where I may feast my heart upon that face

And on the stuff of my mortality

Grave it too deep for death.

How beautiful thou art !

Princess. Love, I am glad.

Königsmarck. When didst thou love me first ?

Princess. I cannot tell,

Sure a long while.

Königsmarck. Thou didst forbear to love me

A weary while, hard wert thou in the winning,

But when thou givest thyself 'tis done right royally,

Even as the prize is royal. When did thy soul,

Thy stubborn soul first own the mastery
Of sov'reign Love ?

Princess. 'Twas on a certain night
I am fain not to remember.

Königsmarck. That same night
You frowned on me ?

Princess. Hush ! There are many thoughts
Which slumber lightly here—do not awaken them,
For I would pack my recollection full
Of this one perfect hour, of this one moment,
And make it all my life.

I never was alive till now, and afterwards
I shall be dead, but in my sepulchre
Let me be hymning joy because I lived
Once, thus in thine arms.

Königsmarck. Live happily and longer than thou
bodest.

Here will I charm away unhappy thoughts
With one touch of my magic on thy brow,
Thus with a little rain of tender charms
Forbid these eyes to tears.

[*Sounds without the door. KÖNIGSMARCK
stands away from the PRINCESS.*]

Königsmarck. I know you, Madam,
Eager to hear the last sad history
Of our renowned Prince——

[*Enter lacqueys carrying lighted candles
in heavy silver candelabra. They
are followed by a Major-domo and
LEONORA V. KNESEBECK.*]

Leonora. Count Königsmarck !

SCENE II

The garden at Herrenhausen, as before. It is dusk on a warm summer evening. A large moon is rising; the terrace and gardens are illuminated with coloured lamps, and there is a distant sound of music. Bands of maskers in dominos, some carrying torches, come along the terrace, descend the steps and pass out of sight in the garden. They sing.

First band of maskers.

In the cool young dawn of the summer morn
Fresh buds open fairest—

Come away!—

But every scent that yields content
At eventide is rarest.

Come away!

Now the evening closes.

Second band.

Under the moon over petals strewn
Wander souls of roses,

In the alleys dim where the fountains brim
Softly they are sighing.

Come away!

Now the dusk is dying.

Third band.

Under the moon in a night of June
—Such a night as this is—

They are fluttering free from the red rose tree
And falling there in kisses.

Come away! Come away!

[LEONORA VON KNESEBECK, *in mask and domino, detaches herself from the last band of maskers as they pass and waits under the terrace. A band of revellers, without dominos, come in dancing. They bring music with them and sing as they dance.*

Viol and flute

No more be mute,

Come dancing, dancing, dancing !

Fa la la !

Mark the measure !

Here is pleasure !

Praise no longer love and wine

Cupid's bow or Bacchus' vine,

I'd give them both for dancing !

Fa la la !

Topers you

Join not our crew,

Who trip and fleet

On airy feet

And wings of music dancing.

Fa la la !

Lovers who

Two and two

Wander lost in charmèd gazing,

Not for you the flute is phrasing

Fairy calls across the dew.

Here no sighing fancy fools us,

Only merry music rules us,

Flying here and there pursuing,

Only true to music's wooing,
Side by side
We sway and glide,
Now we link and now divide,
We smiling serve,
And gaily swerve
From fair to fair in dancing.

Fa la la !

Lightly trip,
Hand on hip,
She who's featest
Shall be sweetest
Beauty's brows out-shining.
Now again
Link the chain
One with other swiftly twining,
Ring on ring
Wind and swing,
Slower now, round around,
Till our woven maze unwound,
Hand in hand
We revellers stand
And sing the praise of dancing.

Fa la la !

[KÖNIGSMARCK *is among the dancers.*
As they pass out he detaches himself
from them and remains behind.
When all are gone except KÖNIGS-
MARCK, LEONORA steps forward,
removing her mask.

Leonora. Count Königsmarck.

Königsmarck. It is you, dear Confidante ?

Leonora. Whom else might you suppose ?

Königsmarck. My dearer lady.

Leonora. The Princess ?

Königsmarck. Hush ! Her name is Léonisse.

Leonora. How poorly do you think of Léonisse,
Who imagine her creeping disguised in the dark
To meet a midnight lover !

Königsmarck. She repents
That ever she did love me.

Leonora. She repent ?

Ah, no, no, no ! Unweariedly
As the nightingale echoes her own long cry,
Her everlasting passionate appeal
To enveloping night and the removed stars,
Thus would your Léonisse reiterate
Her dear denial.

Königsmarck. Tell her who yet loves me
Four words with her, only four little words
I supplicate, dream of as famishing men
Who dream of banqueting.

Leonora. A worthy lover
Of Léonisse would find in sheer obedience
And recollection feasts.

Königsmarck. A worthy lover ?
The armed angels, Heaven's bright counsellors,
Michael and Gabriel are forbid to woo her ;
Therefore her lover must be man. By God,
He were much less who'd bear these prohibitions,
These childish blank evasions !

Madame la Princesse

Plays at the princely tables ; Kœnigsmarck
Must every night be there, to bow and pass,
And pace the corridor, tearing his ruffles
For very rage—the Venice point ones, Madam.
Nay, but this passes jesting.
She talks with God knows whom, but not with
me,
Smiles on the universe, but not on me,
Plunges those lovely looks in other eyes,
But not in mine.

Leonora. How answers Léonisse?
At morning she awakes, and hears the day
Beginning and is glad.

Your Léonisse

Says to her love : " How fair is the green earth
Because it holds thy heart ! " Says to her love,
" How triumphingly the hours
Clamour from tower to tower, because they lead
In glad procession again the bridal hour
We meet, only we two in all the crowd ! "

Königsmarck. Meet ! Unendurable torture !

Leonora. Says to her love, "How beautiful is the world,
Because it holds our hearts!"
Have you no happy word for Léonisse?

Königsmarck. Tell her—your chains are cruel, Léonisse,
Heavy, cutting the flesh, say that I wear them
In mortal anguish, and unspeakable joy.
Stay, stay, Leonora! Tell, if one dare tell her,
Nightly I watch her window, blind and blank

And hopeless as my heart. But once in a dream
 I saw a curtain suddenly drawn, I saw
 A lamp in the window. Then with winged feet
 I flew alone the way I went with Charles,
 Up through the postern door, by the Hall of
 Knights,
 And found the Princess. This was but a dream,
 Yet should she need me—then remember it.
 I am there and have the means to enter.

Say——

Leonora. [*Replacing her mask.*]

Dominos on the terrace ! Let me hence !

Farewell, Count Königsmarck—I shall remember.

[KÖNIGSMARCK and LEONORA go away
 in opposite directions. While they
 have been talking MADAME PLATEN
 has approached along the terrace
 above, followed by MESBACH. Both
 are in dominos.]

Madame Platen. Hush ! Who is the domino yonder ?

Mesbach. Who ?

Dear Madame Platen, I am no magician !

Madame Platen. 'Tis not the Princess, Mesbach ?

Mesbach. No, that's certain,

I'll swear to that.

Madam, you are obeyed.

I have easily obtained her Highness' domino
 And gloves, thrown off, and left just where she
 flung them.

Madame Platen. A careless fool ! I half suspected
 her

Of some deep plan. Ay, there's her domino !
 Blue with a scarlet broïdery, unmistakable
 Even in the dusk. Her gloves, richly embroidered
 With the arms of Hanover, the Prince's present
 To his dear spouse. Fortune, my deity,
 Be favourable now to thy rash votress
 But half an hour ! So may we make innocuous
 For all her days the insolent Frenchwoman,
 The brat of Zell !

Mesbach. And this unmannered Swede,
 This Königsmarck——?

Madame Platen. Will be well caught.

Speed, Mesbach !

The Prince is yonder, drinking in the pavilion,
 Königsmarck's near, walking alone. Deliver him
 A message in a feigned voice, this glove

[*Giving MESBACH the PRINCESS's glove.*]

Give him for token. Say a lady sent it
 Who awaits him eagerly on the marble seat
 Under the terrace. Then haste to the Prince,
 Persuade him presently by some device
 To walk with others on the terrace. There
 I warrant they'll see sport, if you'll but care-
 lessly

Rap with your cane upon the balustrade
 When near enough to mark the scarlet broïdery
 On this loving lady's domino.

Mesbach. And if
 Our Königsmarck swallow the bait.

Madame Platen. Begone
 And do your part featly, as I'll do mine.

[MESBACH goes out. MADAME PLATEN takes off her domino and replaces it by that of the PRINCESS OF HANOVER. She comes down from the terrace and seats herself on the marble bench below it and puts on her mask. HILDEBRAND, who has observed her, himself unobserved, passes in a domino, playing on the viol.

Hildebrand [Singing.]

*At eve the spinners tell beside the doorway
Of evil spirits and their accursed love,
Fiercer than hate. Close well the curtains,
For the moon—and what beside?—is awake.*

[He goes out singing in the direction whence KÖNIGSMARCK presently enters, holding the PRINCESS'S glove in his hand.

Königsmarck. You have summoned me, Madam, and
with all speed
I have obeyed

[MADAME PLATEN sighs and remains silent.

With what commands——?

Madame Platen. [Holding out the fellow glove to that he has in his hand and speaking in a whisper.]

You know it not,

The token?

Königsmarck. On the Electress' honoured hand
I have seen a glove——

Madame Platen. The Electress, Königsmarck !

You must be mad !

Königsmarck. Clearly mistaken, Madam.

Madame Platen. Some three-score years of frozen
majesty

You flew to embrace——!

Königsmarck. Heaven be my witness——

Madame Platen. Hardly !

Is there no younger lovelier lady, Königsmarck,
May wear the arms of Hanover ?

Königsmarck. I know one

That has adorned the arms of Hanover,
Whose white hand wields the power of Hanover,
Who therefore well might wear on that white hand
The coat of Hanover—Clara von Platen.

Madame Platen. Philip, you have guessed well. O
my fond heart,

My vainly kind, impassioned, faithful heart !

Surely not exigent, but questioning solely

In the humility of entire love

Whether my Philip, he who was my Philip

Once for a little while, had it in remembrance ;

Or whether war and the great wandering sea

And fever-fires, wasting the blood, have wasted

And blotted out even to the recollection——

Ah, Königsmarck !

Königsmarck. Madam, you have been too gene-
rous——

Madame Platen. To an unthankful man——

Königsmarck. For your own fortunes.

Consider and recall your wonted wisdom

And famed prudence. Let no imagined rivalry
 Fanning to fire some cooled embers, cause you
 Forget your real interests. How? Shall we
 Who have learned love's commerce in the exchange
 of courts,

Affect to think an oath when lovers swear it
 Better than empty air, Cupid's bright bonds
 A web stronger than morning gossamer
 Woven o'er the shepherd's path?

Why do I speak?

I am your jest, accomplished friend. You have heard
 Calumnious men accuse me of some passion
 Such as old poets feigned in ignorant days,
 And duped the world. You by an artifice
 Thought to discover me in folly, Madam,
 And read me a friend's lesson. Well, I thank you,
 Although I need it not.

Madame Platen. You judge me rightly.
 Rumour affirms you have refused obedience
 To a royal summons, bidding you return
 To Sweden and your estate, or else stand forfeit
 Of all your lands—this for a woman's sake :
 The Princess of Hanover.

Königsmarck. Do they say that?
 True, I will not yield to the King and sacrifice
 My liberty, light, and the whole dear world
 To be mew'd up in dark at his good pleasure,
 Among mere savages. But—for a woman?
 Madam, we of the court, surely the top
 And flower of the modern time, can we believe
 There lives or man or woman whose possession

Is worth to us prosperity and power,
Ambition, ease, riches and whole estate ?
Is worth our fame, is worth our hopes of heaven,
Our tears, our blood, life, everything—I mean,
We fall not in such error.

Platen. Do we not ?

Königsmarck. I have ever deemed
One hazardous hour, a mad night of adventure,
The sparkle of love and foam of its swift wine,
Which is not for enduring—and so prized it.
And thus did you, who yet would not for love
Sacrifice power. Did we not put a period
To our old brief amour when the Elector
Conceived but a suspicion ?

Madame Platen. Nay, not I !
Were you afraid ? O not my founded fortunes,
Which I with my own hand know to defend
Against all challengers, you so considered,
But for yourself you feared ! Count Königsmarck,
You yet may find basely to have betrayed
A heart like mine more perilous to your fortunes
Than to outbrave the Elector.

Königsmarck. Be it so ;
Yet I will not believe Clara von Platen
Will like a country girl or play actor,
Become high-tragical for love, for love
Invoke ruin and revenge. Lady, you are angry
And talk beneath yourself.

Platen. O this hushed heat,
This brooding thunder ! It plays upon the
nerves— !

You have surprised me with far other faults
Than those men blame in you. You are not
rash,

Generous and ardent, no, but calculating,
Cold, measured past the mean.

I am undeceived.

You are indeed in nothing different
From other men. We women of the world,

*[Listening she hears footsteps approach-
ing along the terrace above, and a
light rapping on the balustrade.]*

Accept and leave like partners in the dance
Our lovers, yet like partners in the dance,
Not without courtesies. The courtesies
Of love are kisses, Königsmarck, and thus,
[Flinging her arms round his neck.]

For the last time and for remembrance sake
I kiss a mouth once dear.

*[The PRINCE OF HANOVER, PLATEN and
MESBACH have approached along the
terrace and look down upon the
pair.]*

Prince.

So! Here's your pair!

*[MADAME PLATEN, dropping the
PRINCESS'S glove on the ground,
hastens away down an alley.]*

Prince. After the lady, Mesbach!

*[He climbs over the balustrade and
drops on his feet in front of KÖNIGS-
MARCK.]*

Ha! *Mille diables!*

We have caught you, Königsmarck, ay, and caught her,

Though she bolted like a rabbit.

Königsmarck. I assure your Highness
You are most opportune, though sudden, by
Bacchus,

In your arrival.

Prince. Curse your impudence!

She was in your arms.

Königsmarck. Would she had been in yours,
Electoral Highness!

Prince. Hell and damnation, Sir!

Platen, I say! Listen to him, friend Platen!

[COUNT VON PLATEN *having descended
from the terrace by the steps,
approaches the PRINCE.*

He holds my wife in his arms, under my eyes,
I say he holds the Princess——

Königsmarck. How? The Princess?
Pardon me, Highness, that extreme of honour
Has not been mine. The Princess! Well, to-
morrow

Your Highness will be sorry—or have forgotten
This freak of your French wine.

Prince. Insolent foreigner!
Platen, he denies it was the Princess.

Königsmarck. *Diantre!*

I do deny it.

Count v. Platen. Very naturally,
Inevitably, I may say— Be calm
Highness, I implore. But, Sir, the domino

Was unmistakable. What lady of the court
Wears such another? Who would dare to take
Her Highness' domino?

Königsmarck. That, Sir's, a riddle
To which yourself may know the answer, I—
Do not.

[*The PRINCE has picked up the PRINCESS's
glove, thrown down by MADAME
PLATEN, and examined it by a lamp.
He holds it out to KÖNIGSMARCK.*

Prince. Here is proof positive. Look at this glove.
Your domino, your masked *bona roba*
Dropped it.

Königsmarck. A glove with the arms of Hanover,
Such as the Prince uses to give. Why, then
'Tis like some *bona roba* had it, which
Your Highness may decide.

Prince. Out, damned liar!
This glove I gave the Princess.

[*Drawing his sword.*

Königsmarck. Didst thou so?
Then did the Princess from a hand too white
To wear such soilure, thus contemptuously
[*Flinging the scabbard from his sword.*] Dismiss it.

Prince. I have done with words. On guard!

[*The PRINCE and KÖNIGSMARCK begin
to fight. COUNT PLATEN endeavours
to intervene without coming within
reach of their swords.*

Count v. Platen. Electoral Highness! Prince! Now
in God's name

Down with your sword, cursed traitor !

Murderer ! Help !

Prince. Peace, fool ! I want no help.

[*MESBACH comes in and throws himself upon KÖNIGSMARCK.*

Prince. [*Lowering his sword.*] Mesbach, let go !

Count v. Platen. [*Holding the PRINCE.*]

Pardon my violence, Highness !

[*To MESBACH.*] You have found the lady ?

Prince. Ay, what of the lady ?

You overtook her ?

Mesbach. No, she has disappeared

Utterly, Highness.

Prince. Disappeared ! The domino

Has disappeared, Mesbach, but here's the lady,

The unabashed lady ! I know her !

Darkness and dominos are no disguise

To me, and a mask may hide her from the sun,

But not from my discernment.

*Enter the PRINCESS OF HANOVER and PRINCE ERNEST,
without masks or dominos.*

Königsmarck. [*Laughing scornfully.*]

Your discernment !

Prince. [*To the PRINCESS.*]

Madam, you are bold ; or else you are uncertain

Whether you were detected. Yes, we saw
you,

Three of us recognised you plainly. Caught,

Madame la Princesse !

Princess. [To PRINCE ERNEST.]

What does his Highness say ?

Methinks his wine babbles.

Königsmarck.

Madam, let me answer.

A woman foolish or confederate

With your Highness' enemies, dared to assume

Your domino. Princess, upon my soul,

Not for one moment could I misconceive

Your mind so much, so much mistake your person,

As to believe this woman, this ambiguous

Piece of gallantry, you. After some compliments

As though in jest, she embraced me suddenly

And fled ; just as by a most singular hazard,

The Prince and these obsequious gentlemen

Appeared to witness our endearments.

Prince.

So !

You've got your story, Madam. Swear to it,

Or do not swear—'tis of no consequence.

Three of us marked you hanging on his neck.

Did we not, Platen ? Mesbach ?

Count v. Platen.

Most unhappily,

And to our amazed grief.

Mesbach.

It was the Princess.

I'll stake my honour on that.

Princess.

M. de Mesbach

Has staked his honour ! Do you not stand to win

Something more worth the having than your honour ?

A court place or a pension ?

Prince Ernest. When did this happen ?

Königsmarck. Not fifteen minutes ago.

Prince Ernest. The Princess of Hanover
Has been unmasked, undominoed in my company
An hour by the clock.

Prince. A brave boy ! Be her witness,
Perjure thy soul to spite thy brother——!

Enter the ELECTOR and MADAME PLATEN.

Elector. Quarrelling !
On this delightful evening ! Shame, young
people !

Prince Ernest. Highness and honoured Father, here's
a conspiracy
Against our Sophie. The Prince dares to affirm
He and his hirelings saw her with Count Königs-
marck.

Prince. We saw her in a domino, kissing Königsmarck
Here where I stand.

Elector. George, you are troublesome.
A kiss ! To-night's a carnival of kisses,
And some one sure's kissing your Schulenburg
While you neglect her for the ungrateful business
Of spying on your wife.

Prince. Do I understand
Your Highness winks at infidelities——?

Princess. No, but he smiles to hear your lame inven-
tions.

Grandfather, I have been in Ernest's company
Since we rose from table.

Elector. Yes, yes, daughterling.

Prince. Madam, whose glove is this ? A glove from Flanders.

I gave it you and you carelessly flung it
At the feet of your inamorato.

Princess. This ?

I left it in the orangery. Ernest,
Did I not leave my gloves and domino
In the orangery ?

Prince Ernest. You did. A score of witnesses
Can vouch that we were there.

Mesbach. I saw their Highnesses
In the orangery. I also saw them leave it
Half an hour since.

Prince. Ay, there 'tis ! Half an hour
You'll not account for !

Prince Ernest. Every moment of it.
We were at the great fountain to see the fireworks.

Prince. In the dark—unrecognised, of course.

Prince Ernest. I know not,
Nor care, by God. You have my word for it, brother,
And shall accept the same.

Prince. How if I will not,
Jackanapes ? Do you touch your sword ?

Elector. Peace, princes !
Sophie, when gentlemen begin to jar
Ladies had best begone. Leave us, my daughter,
And leave in peace. Ernest defends your cause
And I am judge.

Princess. I obey, honoured Elector,
With a tranquil mind, knowing that I am innocent
As you are just.

[*She goes away.* SCHULENBURG *draws near.*

Prince Ernest. I say we were by the fountain——

Prince. You say and cannot prove. Who was at the fountain

Beside yourself ?

Schulenburg. I was, for one, my Prince.

I waited for you there.

Prince. *Peste !* I had forgotten.

Elector. Fair nymph, had you no other occupation

But waiting for a lag o' love ?

Schulenburg. Yes, Highness.

I was eating caramels.

Elector. What ! All the while ?

Schulenburg. No, for I ate them all—[*To the PRINCE*]

—my silver box,

You gave me—full, and still you never came.

Prince Ernest came and helped me eat your caramels,

Did you not, Sir ? [*To PRINCE ERNEST.*]

Prince. Then the Princess of Hanover

Was not in his company.

Schulenburg. Yes, but she was,

She was close behind. But for all that Prince Ernest

Chatted with me.

Elector. George, here is a witness

Not to be traversed.

Prince. Nay, 'twas not for long,

Cannot have been for long——

Schulenburg. It was all the time

I waited—that was hours.

What! are you jealous?

'Tis too much wine makes you so quarrelsome,
Besides forgetful.

Elector. Well, this matter's settled!

I pronounce judgment. The Princess of Hanover
Is proved not guilty. George, thou swinish fellow,
Thou shalt make ample apology to this lady
And to the Princess. Nay, thou owest excuse
To me for spoiling such an evening. Lord!
We were growing young again, were we not,
Clara?

Here comes the dancers. Tune up! Join them,
all!

*[Dancers rush in, with music. The
ELECTOR offers his hand to MADAME
PLATEN, PRINCE ERNEST to ERMIN-
GARDA VON SCHULENBURG, and all
join the dance except the ELECTORAL
PRINCE.]*

The dancers. [Singing.]

Viol and flute
No more be mute,
Come dancing, dancing, dancing!
Fa la la!
Mark the measure,
Here is pleasure,
A fig for love, a fleer for wine!
Cupid's bow and Bacchus' vine!
I'd give them both for dancing!
Fa la la!

Topers you
Join not our crew,
Who trip and fleet
On nimble feet
And wings of music dancing.
Fa la la !

[*All dance off, leaving the ELECTORAL
PRINCE alone.*]

SCENE III

[*Night. The PRINCESS OF HANOVER's apartment. The ELECTRESS standing wrapped in a hood and cloak, the PRINCESS still in the same dress as in the preceding scene, her domino and mask thrown off on a chair. LEONORA VON KNESEBECK in the background.*]

Princess. Your justice, Madam ? The Prince of Hanover

Unpardonably insults—more, he conspires
With hireling knaves to ruin and defame
One whom he should protect, even with his life,
From shadow of defamation. He conspires
To blacken me, his wife——

Electress. Pshaw ! You are fanciful.
George is a boor, dull, destitute of feeling,
But for your conspiracy ! I say 'tis folly,
And so does the Elector.

Princess. Ay, even the Elector.

Electress. Mere childish invention !

Princess. Is it an invention
That the Prince insulted me grossly, and you,
You and the Elector, Madam, are content
When he refuses all apology?

Electress. Content! Am I a fool to be content
With the Prince of Hanover? I have abandoned
The hope to mend his manners: so must you.
Shall we imprison him for that he denies
A due apology? Proclaim a scandal
Engendered by your indiscretion?

Princess. Mine?

Electress. Assuredly. What caused this amorous lady,
One of the Swede's so easy conquests, choose
Your domino for disguise?

Princess. What have I done?

Electress. Nothing almost; and yet a world too
much

For one that wears your name. A month ago
In the palace garden, walking with your daughter,
You took her in your arms—with a score of
women

To wait upon the Princess, you must carry her!

Princess. A mortal sin!

Electress. No, merely ridiculous.
The scandal follows. Königsmarck was observed
To approach your Highness with an obsequious
haste,

And take the child; carry her princely Highness,
Walking beside you, up the steps of the palace.

Princess. Thus did Count Königsmarck? O
horrible!

Electress. Do you laugh, unstaid girl? Does
dignity

And the religious forms which rampart round
The power of Princes, move you but to laughter?
Let fear control you then. You have enemies;
Your husband's one. Suppose you have done
nothing,

That's not enough: you should say, smile, look
nothing

Which hate or love might construe to a meaning
Beyond your thought.

Princess. So must you re-create me.
I am not such a thing, cold, calculating,
A mere machine of State, I am alive,
Young, and a woman.

Elector. There are many women
In the world': you are the Princess of Hanover.

Princess. Who dared to make me so? My enemies.
I was a child then—now I'd kill myself
Before I'd be your Princess.

Electress. Sophie of Zell,
Remember who you were, raised to what height
From dubious birth and obscure ancestry,
Made equal to what lineage, made the mother
Of princes, even of monarchs—you to spurn
The illustrious House of Hanover?

Thou bastard!

Princess. 'Tis a false name! My mother is more
honourable,
More dear to me than all the crowns of the earth
And all their pompous wearers.

Electress. The stroke of midnight !

And like a fool I rob my bed to wrangle

With a high-tempered chit.

Madam, good night—

And may your good night bring consideration

And due respect.

[The ELECTRESS goes out.]

Princess. Consideration ! Thou darest enjoin me

Consider ! I will consider thee, thou enemy

Of my mother's honour, fraudulent bargainer

And robber of my life, my mortal only

Inestimable life, for what mean price

Bought, for what mockery sold !

Away, Electress!

Chide at your daughter of Prussia, bid her exercise

Discretion, count her lovers if you can

And mulct her if you may.

And thou, Discretion,

Thou slant-eyed sister of young Virtue, never

Twinned in your birth, come, I will entertain thee

To-morrow. But to-night, Madam and Highness.

Shall be a holiday. You have sent packing—

I thank you for 't—the sharp unslaked Virtue

Whose fangs were in my heart, making me sacrifice

My sweet sole friend, put out irrevocably

The one light of dim life and quite abandon

My hope of human joy.

Extreme honour,

Indulgence and mild courtesy were nothing

To compensate that loss, but calumny,

Insult and scorn—! I thank you, House of
Hanover!

My debt is paid, I am free.

Leonora. Weeping, dear lady,
Will balm our misery better than laughter.

Princess. Misery? I am mad with all the joy
Of all my years, my youth-consuming years'
Hoarded, unspent delight.

Say, Leonora,
Where are my wings? Do they not shoot up
radiant,
A splendour of snowy vans, swimming the air
Just ere the rush of rapture?

*[Without, returning revellers are passing
by with music and laughter.]*

Hark! They know
And clamour out our joy. Look up, my Philip,
And see thy young star shine!
The lamp, Leonora!

Leonora. Highness! Honoured lady!
Consider—wait awhile.

Princess. O, I have waited
More years than now shall fiery moments fleet
Ere I embrace my joy!

*[She seizes a lamp, and approaches the
window. LEONORA endeavours to
restrain her.]*

How? Wouldst thou venture?
Nay, girl, but I am mistress.

Leonora. Madam, to-night
He is at Herrenhausen—

Princess.

Or at Monplaisir ?

No, he is there. A fire runs from his presence
And leaps into my blood, I need no question
Of eye or ear.

*[She draws back the curtain, and places
the lamp in the window.]*

Do now as I command thee.

Haste to the postern door, for though thou speed
He will outrun thee. Bring Count Königsmarck.

[LEONORA goes out.]

Now shall the long, mad hunger of my heart
Be satisfied, now do I dare to look
On the face of Life before I look on Death.
And I wait for him here. Can it be I,
The poor sad prisoned girl, the soul shut out
For ever and ever from her heritage
Of love and happiness ? Who could have guessed
That I should be so happy, I should love
And be beloved again ?

*[Presently KÖNIGSMARCK comes in alone.
He pauses as though in doubt for
what reason he has been summoned.
The PRINCESS flies to meet him.]*

My Königsmarck !

ACT III

SCENE I

A camp. KÖNIGSMARCK'S tent. A table with the remains of a supper upon it. MESBACH, LINDHOF, BARON v. BÖHL, and other Hanoverian officers drinking round it. KÖNIGSMARCK with a glass in his hand, singing.

When Cupid fell from golden hell
To earth, sweet earth,
Mid April blooms he tossed his plumes,
And robbed the tongue of every bird
In vain, in vain to tell
The rapture Heaven has never heard,
To tell the wondering earth
His happy heavenly mirth.

The airy flight of blossoms white,
Pale, pale, and frail,
He first pursued, he gently wooed,
And flying, sighing, let them go,
Weary for some delight
That may not in their beauty grow,
Their petals argent pale
That heavenward, earthward sail.

When Cupid knew how roses blew,
Red, rose red,
How deep in June they steep the noon
In orient odours, triumphing dyes—
When Love the wanderer knew,
He stooped his wing, and yonder lies,
Choosing a royal bed
Of roses, roses red.

Mesbach. A bumper to his mistress !

All. To his fair mistress !

Königsmarck. [*Kneeling.*] Drink it on your knees !

Mesbach. Here's to the beauteous Sophie,
The incomparable Dorothea !

Königsmarck. [*Rising.*] To Caroline,
To Eleanore, Giovanna, Beatrix,
To all the ladies who have loved and left me,
The adorable ladies I have loved and left,
Drink and have done ! Then, drink to Bellona,
Our Lady of War, drink to the dark Bellona,
My now divinity and only mistress.

Several Officers. Bellona ! Ha, ha, ha ! His only
mistress !

First Officer. Look at his chin ! Clean shaven, on
my honour !

Bellona comes to-night.

Lindhof. When a four days' beard
Blackened it, Lindhof swore it mourned my love.
There are men here that when my liver ails
Accuse my heart and if I cough at night,
Will swear I sigh for some long absent lady—
Which one I have forgot.

Second Officer. Enough of healths !

[*To First and Third Officers.*]

Gentlemen, to the watch ! I trust you still walk straight

And know the countersign.

[*To Königsmarck.*] My thanks, Sir Count,
For your right good wine, I have drunk none so good

Since we left Hanover. You must to the watch
At three o'clock. Good night. Sleep while you may.

[*All rise and prepare to go out. Enter*
CONRAD.

Conrad. My lord, a lady would speak with your lordship.

Königsmarck. What dost thou say ? A lady ?

Conrad. A fine lady
And in a fine coach.

Königsmarck. Man, thou art mistaken.
Doubtless she would see the Marshal.

Conrad. 'Tis Count Königsmarck
She wants ; and has ridden through a power of dirt
And the damndest weather, as the postillion told me,

But for a word with you.

First Officer. Bellona, Königsmarck ?

Königsmarck. More like a certain tedious dowager,
A beggar for commissions, posted from Hanover
To plague me——

Conrad. Nay, from Zell, quoth the postillion.

Königsmarck. Fellow, thou liest !

Mesbach. [*To CONRAD.*] Is she a pretty lady ?

Thy master fears she's not.

Conrad. That is she, tho' I saw her in the dark. A young lady

With a brave black eye and a fair hand, your Honour.

Mesbach. A black eye and fair hand ! Fortunate Königsmarck.

Sirs, we'll make room for the lady.

Third Officer. Count, adieu.

We'll drink her health to-morrow.

[*MESBACH and all the other OFFICERS take leave and go out.*]

Königsmarck. [*To CONRAD.*] Thou accursed hound,
Now could I kill thee with my naked hands,
And beat thee to a pulp !

Conrad. Softly, good Master !

Mind you, I saved your life in the Morea.

Königsmarck. Ay, that thou didst.

But now thy devilish tongue hath done a murder
Not to be named. Man, what is thy concern
With noble ladies ? How dare'st thou to know
Or even conjecture whether they be fair
And young or otherwise, and on what errand
They travel to thy master ? Who has bought
thee ?

Who bade thee, fellow, with a trumpet mouth
To blare thy master's business to the crowd,
His secret business, villain ?

Conrad. Softly, sir !

I am no villain, but a plain honest man.
 I sell your secrets, I? For shame, my lord!
 That you have a mistress, why, I know it, God's
 death!

Not being so ignorant as I cannot read
 A lady's hand in the knot of a green ribbon
 Tying a letter, or the amorous kiss
 Of a fine seal on delicate wax. A mistress
 You have, my lord, and one so beautiful
 I boast for you any of these gentlemen
 That made so merry on 't, would burst with pride
 To be loved by a lady half so fair as this one.

Königsmarck. I see thou art already her servant.

Conrad,

Thy master is no more. Let us both be secret,
 And lead me to her.

Conrad. My lord, she waits without.

Königsmarck. Gods! Bring her in. [*CONRAD goes out.*]

O thou divine madwoman!

Léonisse, this is ill done! My heart's delight,
 Shall I indeed hold thee——?

Enter CONRAD, showing in AURORA v. KÖNIGSMARCK.

KÖNIGSMARCK, after a moment of bewilderment,
 bursts into a laugh.

Königsmarck. My sister Aurora! Now, by Heaven,
 fair sister,

Thou hast sent my thoughts galloping on a wild-
 goose chase!

Aurora. A disappointment? My apologies.

Conrad.

Ay,

A disappointment. Yet, now I consider it,
I am glad your ladyship is a true sister,
Else you might ruin my master.

Aurora. How so, fellow?

Conrad. You have a thievish smile. Nay, be not
angry—

A smile to steal the wit from a common soldier
And make him empty his hard-hoarded gold
To fulfil your least desire. For gentlemen,
To whom God of his goodness gave soft head-
pieces

And leaky purses.—Well, God ha' mercy on 'em
When they are not your brothers.

Aurora. A rude flatterer!

Thy wits I have not stolen, and now will show thee
I am more apt to enrich a gallant soldier
Than to devour his earnings.

[*Giving him money.*] So begone.

[*CONRAD goes out.*]

Königsmarck. You are welcome, sister.

What hazard brings you hither?

Aurora. You know my custom—

To prowl the earth more diligently than Satan.

Königsmarck. But why wrapped in a mystery?

Aurora. Sweet brother,

Look not so solemnly. Must I inform you
That I am beautiful? I know there are women
Who far excel me, but your sex, my Philip,
Worship by companies and prefer a chorus
In love to singing solo. I am the fashion,
And such a herd of amorous gentlemen

Would gather in your tent were 't known I am
with you,

As would annoy us both.

Königsmarck. Yet am I sorry.

Thus you afford room for a false conjecture.

Aurora. For whom may you have taken me ?

No, surely !

Not for the Princess ?

Königsmarck. Hush !

Aurora. Preposterous man !

Blush for thine own delirium.

Königsmarck. [*Taking a letter from his bosom and kissing it.*] I will not—

For look, I am the proudest creature alive

And think no honour too extravagant

Nor joy extreme beyond my expectation,

When she, the vaunt of princes, the delight

Of the gazing earth, she, my adored lady,

Here in her crystal chalice of clear words

Pours me love's reddest wine. Thou potent vin-
tage!

Methinks my stretched hand could reach the stars

And rob a constellation for her crown,

Or smite compelling music from heaven's lyre

Till all that lived and things inanimate

In one mad measure hymned the ecstasy

Of our unmatched love.

Aurora. I would you could,

So had you spared perhaps to do much madlier,

You have your pretexts, brother, but I know

'Twas for this passion of yours you sacrificed

Estate and privileges and made yourself
An exile.

Königsmarck. Yes, an exile and a beggar,
Save for my sword. In that I triumph, Aurora.
For all her kisses I with one mere fortune
Have paid, but she endangers kingdoms for them
And coasts by imminent ruin to my arms.
Though she repent of it in years to come,
Yet will she pardon me,
Will pardon me for this poor proof I loved her.

Aurora. I have been loved often—not once so well.
Is it the truth Platen has offered privately
To pay your debts and afterwards affiance you
To her daughter, princes woo? Ah! It is true?
A vile offer, inevitably refused,
Yet the refusal dangerous.

Königsmarck. No, surely,
It means a passion grown purely political
And soon to be forgot.
I waste the time
Talking of Platen with you who post from Zell.
Tell me of Léonisse. Has she recovered
Entirely from her illness?

Aurora. She is well,
Well and in beauty.

Königsmarck. Have they kept much company
At Zell?

Aurora. Some Highnesses from Hanover.

Königsmarck. What princes have been there?

Aurora. Prince Max——

Königsmarck. I guessed him

She did not tell me, however. Come Aurora,
Did she not kiss him at farewell?

Aurora. No, brother,
Because he is not yet gone.

Königsmarck. Hell and damnation!

Aurora. What, art thou there already, who wert in
Heaven

A moment since? I should believe thee crazed
Had I not lately talked with one in love
Even as thou art. She would sing for joy
One moment, thinking how she had thy heart;
Immediately fall in a fierce despair
Because a gnat hummed in her ear it met thee—
And thou wert not alone.

Königsmarck. O God, Aurora,
How dreadful is this woman's jealousy
Wherewith she tortures him whose entire heart
Is hers for life or death!

You bring no message from her?

Aurora. If I do
I should not.

Königsmarck. Nay, stand and deliver. She says?

Aurora. She says—On Thursday night there is a
moon.

Königsmarck. Well?

Aurora. And the weather is not so much broken
But it may mend.

Königsmarck. And after?

Aurora. If it does,
She says you know the fountain of the faun
In the clipped bosquet at Zell. The lime tree alleys

Wall it about, but should one chance to walk
there

Singing a certain song, a certain casement
Will be open to the music.

Königsmarck. At what hour ?

Aurora. At ten o'clock.

Königsmarck. And then ?

Aurora. She will be with you,
Unless there's danger—if there were the owls
Would scream most melancholy.

Königsmarck. Birds of wisdom !
Let them away ! Our night is not for them,
Nor will it need the enamoured tongues of May
To fill our dark with music.

[*MESBACH enters hastily and addresses
AURORA, who turns her shoulder to
him and pulls her hood over her face.*

Mesbach. I know you, Highness.
Listen ! There are gentlemen standing without
Have sworn to see your face. As a loyal
servant

Of the House of Hanover, I will protect you,
And keep your secret. Thirty thousand gulden
Will be a slight gratuity——

Aurora. [*Throwing back her hood.*] Thirty thousand !
My privacy is dear, but thirty thousand !
Not thirty thousand pfennigs, Herr von Mesbach.
Show in your gentlemen, I will encounter them,
Though 'twere a crowd compact of every lover
And sworn admirer in my catalogue. Philip,
Bid them come on !

Königsmarck. Sister, I obey. [*To MESBACH.*] Good sir,

We shall search out your reasons afterwards.

You understand ?

[*To those without.*] Gentlemen, you are in the rain.

Pray you come in ! I have here an errant lady,
No stranger to you, Lindhof, nor to you, Baron.

[*LINDHOF, BARON VON BÖHL, and other gentlemen come in one by one.*]

Aurora. [*Aside.*] Lindhof ! My latest cast off lover !
I knew it !

My tedious Baron, again !

Lindhof. [*Overcome with emotion.*] Ah, fair Aurora,
What act of grace is this ?

Baron von Böhl. [*Falling on his knee and kissing her hand.*] Divine Aurora,

A singular favour ! An extraordinary happiness !

Would we had expected you ! We are much in the rough——

[*All adjust their dress, cravattes and perukes.*]

SCENE II

A bosquet in the garden of the Castle at Zell. A fountain with a statue of a faun. Moonlight. KÖNIGSMARCK is heard coming along an alley towards the bosquet, playing and singing. He comes in singing.

Cover, O eve, the world with mist
 Till we two shall have kist and kist !
 Linger, O moon, in the western skies,
 Till we have looked in each other's eyes !
 Whisper, O wind ! We shall not speak,
 Heart upon heart and cheek to cheek.
 Drown, wild dawn, the stars in fire !
 We shall have had our heart's desire !

[*The PRINCESS hurries into the bosquet.*

Princess. Philip !

Königsmarck. It is thou !

Princess. Love !

Königsmarck. Is it possible ?

Do I indeed hold thee, my heart's treasure !

Princess. How ? Dare another storm thee so with
 kisses ?

Königsmarck. Ah, my sweet Princess !

Princess. Now if delight could kill, should I be
 dead.

Königsmarck. Love, wilt thou swoon ?

Princess. But I am strong, like a young lioness

Leaping upon her prey. Dost thou not fear me ?

So, when I hold thee fast, my prisoner ?

Königsmarck. Faster, beloved !

Princess. Now will I press the soul out of thy
 mouth !

How little dost thou love me ?

Königsmarck. Léonisse !

Princess. Answer me not, for nothing will avail

To alter it. I am thine irrecoverably.

Königsmarck. Loose me a moment, for my hungry eyes

Would have thy beauty.

Dear, art thou so pale,
Or does the envious moon dissemble thee,
Laying her lilies o'er the bravery
Of my carnations ?

Princess. Pale ? Ah God, my Philip !

Did I not tell thee I was worn with misery,
Ugly, and old, and wasted !

Königsmarck. Léonisse !

Princess. I am mad to love thee !

And madly do I love thee, my prince of the
world.

When other eyes admire and tongues discourse
Thy beauty, praise a magic thou dost wear
Beyond discourse, or tell how thou art high
In the esteem of captains and of kings,
As of enchanted women, then my pride
Runs to illume these windows for my love,
And in triumphant scarlet dress my cheeks
For the unforgotten kisses. But, O me !
When I reflect in the long, lonely nights
How much thou art adored, how fairer women
Woo thee, and I absent, and I unworthy,
So must I weep
And waste my little beauty, and with moan
And various torment, and incessant fear
Post on to ugly age.

Königsmarck. Though all were truth
Which is, Heaven pardon thee, a wanton lie—

Yet do I love thee. Were this delicate sheath
 Wrinkled, and all the mansion of my heart
 Robbed of its exquisite ornaments—I love thee.
 By what shall I swear? By this remembered
 haunt,

These verdured walls of ours, and branched roof,
 By each long alley, by the immortal Loves,
 The naiads and lithe fauns who listen for them
 Quietly through the years. I do conjure
 These whom no transitory seasons touch
 To charm away Time, which is here illusion,
 Bidding old suns to warm, old scents revive
 And the old summer sounds—and two who are
 lovers

Now and apart, unhappy, hand in hand,
 Run joyously, children.

Léonisse,

Child-love and lady-love, star of my youth,
 And deep and perilous passion of my prime,
 My ruin and despair, my soul's salvation,
 The angel of my heart, how could another,
 A mere beautiful woman be to me
 As thou, beloved?

Princess. Philip, she must be nothing!
 I claim thee mine, my own to the least shred,
 Mine by the memory of passionate hours
 These arms have been thy prison, mine, mine only
 By sad uncounted vigils, the forlorn bed
 Where some few letters whisper to me of love
 Awhile and speak no more. My thronging
 kisses

Beat on them and my tears raining implore,
But they will speak no further.

Königsmarck. Answer her,
Dumb letters, tell her how her lover lies,
His midnight lamp hovering upon a face
Fair to enamour anchorites, and tell
How he in love is eloquent and crowds
A million kisses on a lady's lips
That smiling suffer them—but are more silent
Than my dumb letters. Child!—I mean your
portrait.

Princess. Philip!

Königsmarck. Or I sleep and you wander through
my dreams
Till I could curse the world-awakening dawn
That fleets away my joy.

Princess. You dream we are happy?

Königsmarck. Often — and yet — I have another
dream.

Let me not think on't!

Princess. Ah, it is unhappy!

Königsmarck. Horrible. Yet I know not what it is.

Princess. It is a dream, a thing less than a shadow,
The child of memory fathered by a fancy,
'Tis born and dies in a moment. I will face it
Boldlier than thou, my soldier, will outface it
When I have seen its face.

Königsmarck. The face of Platen.

Princess. Then is it ugly.

Königsmarck. I would laugh at it
Could I but grasp the vision. When I wake

The sweat hangs on my hair and some half know-
ledge,

Mortal, and of unspeakable calamity
Freezes my blood, yet all's lost and forgotten,
Save where there drifts dim down the gulf of sleep,
That one sinister face.

Then like a woman

I weep and pray like one, battering the gates
Of inaccessible God, bidding Him smite
Where else He will, but spare, pardon, protect
Thee, thou adored child.

How much unhappiness

I have wrought thee, Léonisse !
'Tis I with my inexorable love
Have made thy life wretched and perilous
Which else might have been happy.

Princess. Happy, Philip ?

Out of a sepulchre of souls still-born,
Didst thou deliver me, and I will thank thee
Always and even for the memory
Of what has been ; for not in circumstance
Is love's evil or good, but in itself
And its own absoluteness.

Königsmarck. Dare you abandon

A hoped crown to wear the name of Königsmarck ?

Princess. An empire.

Königsmarck. God ! that it were possible !

But now are we both alike ruined and robbed.

Princess. Patience, beloved ! My intolerable wrongs
Have won upon my mother——

[LEONORA comes in hastily.]

Leonora. Madam, I beseech you
Come to your apartments. Once already the
Prince——

Königsmarck. What Prince ?

Princess. It is Max.

Leonora. Has hammered at your door,
Very importunate. The Duke your father,
Your mother and the rest have risen from play
And certainly will now visit your Highness.
These will take no denial.

Princess. Dear, I fly !

Königsmarck. Love, not so suddenly !

Princess. Follow me in a while
To the postern gate. If it be possible
When all our nightly ceremonious courtesies
Are done, Leonora shall descend and open—
Nay, but you know the private stair. Your
patience
Needs exercise, Sir, and may chance to get it.

[*The PRINCESS and LEONORA hasten
away. KÖNIGSMARCK paces the
bosquet until he hears footsteps and
voices approaching, when he conceals
himself. The DUCHESS OF ZELL
and PRINCE MAX come in.*

Prince Max. I heard it from the window, Madam,
distinctly.

Duchess. A page practising the lute.

Prince Max. Then as I told you
This morning early as I went a-shooting—
I'll be shot myself if 'twas not Königsmarck

Rode into the town, his face muffled in his cloak,
And Hildebrand behind him.

Duchess. *Dame, good nephew,*
If you are not Sophie's friend you surely should be,
Since 'tis her championship of you young princes
And your infringed rights has injured her
So greatly with the Elector.

Prince Max. Partly, Madam.
Do not mistrust my dear and brotherly friendship
For the Princess. Oh, I know how perilously
She stands and from her pride and indiscretion
I would protect her. The adventurer Königs-
marck
Will be her ruin.

Duchess. I abhor the fellow,
Do from my soul regret Sophie's perversity,
And anger find in him an instrument
To plague her husband with ; yet I half pardon it.
His Electoral Highness all but strangled her
And beat her blue last month.

Prince Max. George is a villain,
And so is Königsmarck.

Duchess. A swaggering ape !
Sophie is most imprudent, yet she is virtuous,
That I will swear. True, she's a born coquette,
But cold as January and ever mocking
At love and at young gentlemen. What's Königs-
marck
To change her disposition ? I have heard her
Speak very slightly of Königsmarck
When other women praised him.

Prince Max. Oh, undoubtedly!

It is not love but wrong and indignation

Throw her in the arms of Königsmarck.

Duchess. His arms!

Never! She would as soon embrace a scorpion.

Prince Max. I am sure of it. I mean make her
imperil

So much for him. He labours to entangle her

Merely to boast a conquest. Were 't achieved

He were gone already, vaunting it through
Europe.

Duchess. Well, well! There's no one here.

Prince Max. Perhaps there has been.

Duchess. You are more suspicious than a husband.

Prince Max. Jealous
Of the honour of our House—and Sophie's happiness.

Duchess. 'Tis a chilly night for lovers. Let's within.

Prince Max. Willingly, madam.

Duchess. I warrant we find my daughter
In bed by now, waiting our nightly visit.

[*They leave the bosquet. KÖNIGSMARCK
emerges from his concealment.*]

Königsmarck. My thanks, your Highnesses. Hurry
Despatch!

Linger not, lest a lover's maledictions

Turn your sound sleep to nightmare.

Nay, sleep sound,

Madame d'Olbreuse and honourable brother

Of our Electoral George, would-be consoler

Of his fair wife, you that do wish her happiness

Sleep sound ! Let the bright world be blotted
out

Under the dim and gradual tide of sleep ;

Only the pacing moon be vigilant,

Far on the crystal confines of the air,

And one white lady,

Moon of my joyous heart, awake for love,

Awake for infinite happiness, awake

In arms that holding her hold Heaven.

Good-night !

Good-night ! Fair dreams attend your Highnesses.

[He leaves the bosquet.]

ACT IV

SCENE I

*An ante-chamber in the Electoral Palace at Hanover.
The lights are extinguished except for one which a
lacquey carries in his hand. He is in attendance
on MADAME PLATEN, who wears a hood and cloak.*

Madame Platen. I say I will see the Elector.

Impudent rogue !

Dare'st thou refuse me ?

Lacquey. Madam, your ladyship,

The Elector is asleep.

Madame Platen. Then must he waken.

Wake him I say, rascal !

Lacquey. Your ladyship

Will tell him 'twas her doing ?

Madame Platen. Fellow, knock !

[*The LACQUEY knocks timidly at a door.
There is no reply. MADAME PLATEN
pushes him aside and knocks loudly.
A voice answers angrily and indis-
tinctly from within.*

Madame Platen. Clara von Platen. Let me in im-
mediately.

[*Again an indistinct voice from within.*

I shall not go. I have matters of importance
Which will not wait till morning. Open, High-
ness ! [To the lacquey.

Light me the sconces yonder. So ! Be off !

I must have private conference with his Highness.

[The LACQUEY obeys her and goes out.

MADAME PLATEN *waits impatiently
until the inner door opens and the
ELECTOR emerges in a dressing-gown,
with a silk handkerchief tied round
his head.*

Elector. The devil, Madam ! What possesses you
To invade my apartments at this hour ? *Potz-
tausend !*

I hate such indecorum. At my age

I'll not be made a laughing-stock and scandal——

Madame Platen. You are a laughing-stock, Sir, and
a scandal

To all the world. The honour of your House
Is openly dragged in the dirt—but you say nothing,
You will do nothing.

Elector. To your business, Clara.

I am weary of such talk.

Madame Platen. Here is my business.

Königsmarck left his house half an hour since——

Elector. Königsmarck ! The old story.

Madame Platen. Königsmarck

Is now in the apartment of the Princess. Haste !

Yourself be judge and witness——

Elector. May the devil

Devour all women ! Madam, am I blind

Or deaf, to be unaware yourself had hankerings
 After this jackanapes? The Princess of Hanover
 Has been perverse, thankless, undutiful,
 We have our quarrel; but I'll not insult her,
 Invade her chamber on the authority
 Of a jealous woman——

Madame Platen. A trusty gentleman
 Saw him, I say, enter——

Elector. Even that is possible——

Yet I refuse. For Königsmarck and she
 Being of an old acquaintance, may desire
 Most honourably to bid a long farewell
 In privacy, unirked by scandalous tongues
 And prying eyes. Do you not know the fellow
 Is made a Marshal by the King of Saxony?
 To-morrow he resigns, he leaves our service
 And Hanover for ever. Understand me.
 I want no scandal, Clara, and to-morrow
 Quietly we close the page of Königsmarck.

Madame Platen. Do you imagine these lovers then
 to-night

Bidding a long farewell, bathed in their tears,
 Bidding farewell? O innocent Elector!

Learn now the truth.

Locked in each others' arms, with insolent joy,
 With scorn and mockery they plan defiance,
 A sounding insult, an unheard-of outrage
 On the crown of Hanover, the dignity
 And honour of your House. Look at this letter——
 I have more here, I speak not without book.
 The Princess of Hanover means to escape,

To-morrow she will fly, all is prepared.
 Whither will fly? To the Duke of Wolfenbüttel!
 The man that but for you had been her husband,
 Your Highness' enemy, the enemy
 Of Hanover—the Duke of Wolfenbüttel!

Elector. The Princess fly? Bah! that's impossible.
 She has not a gulden in her purse——

Madame Platen. She will have.

The sly d'Olbreuse, the scheming Frenchwoman
 Has conjured a new fortune, God knows whence
 And means to endow her daughter. Königsmarck
 Not vainly revels with his King of Saxony.
 Marshal he is, master of lands he will be,
 And means under the nose of Hanover
 To have and hold your Princess.

Elector. Give me the letters,
 I'll see these letters.

[*Reads papers handed to him by MA-
 DAME PLATEN.*

Damned audacious scoundrel!
 And Sophie too! Traitors! To Wolfenbüttel!
 She dares write to the Duke? Ungrateful drab!
 So we are dirt, we of the House of Hanover,
 Compared to Königsmarck! Ho, ho! we flatter,
 Cajole friend Wolfenbüttel, count the hours
 Till we can snap our fingers at Electors,
 Safe with our kings and dukes. To Wolfenbüttel?
 To hell with you!—Reach me some paper, Clara,
 Ink, sealing-wax.

Königsmarck is in her chamber
 To-night, you say?

Madame Platen. He was. You must strike quickly
If you would not miss your blow.

Elector. [*Writing and handing her a sealed paper.*]

You will take these orders
To the Captain of the Guard-room. Trusty
soldiers,

Four of them, halberdiers, will accompany you,
Under your orders, to the Leine Palais—
No, Clara, not to the apartment of the Princess,
To the Hall of Knights. If Königsmarck be
yonder

He must needs pass out along the corridor
To the private stair, by the door that's opposite
The door of the great Hall. Well then, secure him,
Quietly—no bloodshed. Nay, the villain's hand-
some,

You will deal tenderly with him. For the Princess
With her you shall not deal, I will follow you
When I am ready. Secure your prisoner,
And wait until I come to you.

Madame Platen. Your Highness

Shall be instantly obeyed. [*She goes out.*]

Elector. To Wolfenbüttel!

Heartless, ungrateful girl! Sophie, I renounce
thee.

SCENE II

*The Hall of Knights in the Leine Palais, dimly lighted
by a lamp. A door is open, leading into a cor-
ridor, and showing another door opposite. Four*

halberdiers stand in the hall. MADAME PLATEN is in the corridor engaged in cautiously turning and removing the key of the opposite door. She then comes into the Hall and addresses the halberdiers.

Madame Platen. Here, under the great chimney-piece, in the shadow,

Await my signal. The man who makes your business

Will come stealthily along the corridor,

He will try that door, wondering to find it locked,

Which he left open—then, I raise my hand.

First Halberdier. Your ladyship would have us strike him down,

Or take him prisoner, using him with respect ?

We are soldiers, Madam, we know how to obey,

But we want our orders.

Madame Platen. Have I not told you, fellow ?

You must take him prisoner. If he should resist—

And being a gentleman and fully armed,

Surely he comes well-armed, he will resist—

Why, use your weapons, men, strike to some purpose,

What's primary is he does not escape.

Secure the man unhurt, but should he struggle

Be not too scrupulous, strike as you may.

First Halberdier. We'll carry out your ladyship's commands,

If we have understood them.

Madame Platen.

Now stand back.

[The HALBERDIERS hide themselves under the great chimney-piece, in the shadow of the carved knights. MADAME PLATEN goes to the door and peers cautiously down the corridor.]

Madame Platen. [Muttering to herself.] And still he does not come.

A long love-tryst, ay and a long farewell,
Adventurous fool!

How dares he linger? Nay, her arms are about
him

And will not let him go—yet some few kisses!

[She paces the Hall once or twice, then returns to her post of observation. Two o'clock tolls from the bells of the town without.]

It is two o'clock. Listen! No, I hear nothing,
Nothing except the wind shaking the doors.

The nights are short, and soon the stealthy
dawn

Creeps in. Dost thou forget to count the hours,
The swift short hours? Are they so sweet,
Königsmarck?

Hurry those long kisses, for I, I too
Would keep a tryst with thee.

[She approaches the chimney-piece under which the HALBERDIERS are lurking and speaks to them.]

Should he resist,
Fear nothing but to miss your capture—kill him

[*She returns to the open door and again peers cautiously down the corridor, listening. At length a door is heard opening and closing in the distance. She moves stealthily back into the Hall and speaks to the Soldiers.*

The man is coming. You have your orders.
Kill him.

First Halberdier. We shall obey your ladyship's orders.

[*KÖNIGSMARCK is heard walking carelessly along the corridor, humming and singing as he comes. In a minute he is visible through the doorway carrying a light, dressed in a riding-suit and armed only with a very small sword.*

Königsmarck. [Singing.]

*When Cupid knew how roses blew
Red, rose red,
How deep in June they steep the noon
In orient odours, triumphing dyes,
When Love the wanderer knew. . . .*

[*Finding the door opposite that leading into the Hall locked, he places his light on the ground and kneels to examine the lock.*

Madame Platen. [To the Soldiers.] Kill him.

[*The HALBERDIERS rush upon KÖNIGSMARCK, who leaps to his feet.*

First Halberdier. Yield yourself prisoner.

[KÖNIGSMARCK draws his sword and endeavours to defend himself. He is struck down by the HALBERDIERS.]

Madame Platen. Hold! O, Jesus, Jesus!

Königsmarck. Cursed assassins!

Madame Platen. God! You have murdered him.
See, see! He bleeds!

First Halberdier. Yes, we have killed the man,
According to your ladyship's orders.

Madame Platen. Is he dead?

First Halberdier. No, but he will be presently.

Madame Platen. Bring him in.

[The HALBERDIERS lift up KÖNIGSMARCK and bring him into the Hall.]

Lay him here on the ground.

Now Heaven be thanked, he breathes!

'Tis a small wound——

Königsmarck. Killed like a rat in a trap!

My God, the Princess——!

Madame Platen. She brought you to this.

Why were you false to me? Philip, my Philip,
I hate thee not, wilt thou not look on me?

'Twas but a moment's anger—it is the Princess

Has been thy ruin. Philip! O look up!

Merciful God, he is dying! Courage, love,

'Tis but a little wound, it cannot kill thee;

No, I'll not let thee die.

Fetch a physician!

Run for some help!

First Halberdier. Lady, the man's past help.

We have done his business.

[KÖNIGSMARCK opens his eyes, raises himself somewhat, and without observing MADAME PLATEN, addresses the HALBERDIERS.

Königsmarck. Men, I charge you solemnly,
You that have murdered me, do no worse murder,
Kill not my testimony, but bear witness,
I, Philip of Königsmarck, here dying,
Declare the Princess innocent. The Princess
Of Hanover, I say, is innocent.
Remember—she is innocent.

Madame Platen. The Princess !
She who has brought thee to this bloody end,
Lured thee, fond wretch——

Königsmarck. Platen ! Is it thou ? She-devil !
I would my heart held such a river of blood
As through this broken bound, rushing on thee,
Might wash thee red to hell. O my poor lady,
Left to this monster's mercy ! My dying curse,
Platen, my dying curse——

Madame Platen. I will not hear it !
[She stops her ears and stamps upon
KÖNIGSMARCK'S mouth. He drops
back with a groan.

First Halberdier. She-devil, said he !

Other Halberdiers. Now God pardon us !

A devil's dam !

Madame Platen. Fellows, I slipped in his blood——

And trod by accident—God, how he groans !

Merciful God, he groans——!

First Halberdier. Rattles in his throat.

Second Halberdier. He is all but dead.

Third Halberdier. Would he were buried.

Madame Platen. Dead ?

Philip, I never meant it— No, not dead !

How couldst thou dream I hated thee ? I loved thee,

I love thee to despair, to madness, Philip,

Look up, adored, beloved, speak, pardon me—

Nay, torture if thou wilt, reproach, revile,

Swear that thou lovest her, only come back—

Not dead—dead—dead !

Enter the ELECTOR in his usual dress.

Elector. Eh ! What's all this ?

What's wrong with him ?

First Halberdier. He is dead—if that be wrong.

Elector. Hell and damnation ! Dead ! You blundering fools,

I said, secure the man.

First Halberdier. We had our orders

And have obeyed them. Let your Highness ask the lady.

Elector. Come, Madam, come ! Stand up and stop your snivelling,

Though you may well be grieved. A sorry business !

Madame Platen. I never meant—Dear God, how could I mean

To kill him ? Hear me swear——

Elector. You knew my wishes ;
 To avoid scandal, noise and violence.
 And you murder me a man here on the threshold
 Of the Princess's apartment. Man, say I !
 Kill me a Marshal of Saxony.

God be with us !

Here is a foul deed and a foolish.

Madame Platen. Sir,
 Pardon me, do not reprimand these men,
 These honest men, whose zeal has made their
 error.

They would have seized him, but he fought ; your
 Highness

Knows him not easily overmatched, a fighter
 Fierce and impetuous, thus it chanced in the
 struggle,

It happened he was hurt, mortally hurt.
 An evil chance ! Oh, I call Christ to witness,
 If but these heavy tears were my heart's blood,
 These barren tears could weep out all my life
 Drop after burning drop, into the veins
 Of this, this cold incredible effigy
 Of God's most gallant creature—could they do
 so,

I'd weep myself long before day to death
 And yield the living sun to Königsmarck.

Elector. Yes, you are bitter sorry ; but whether you
 meant it,
 And why you should have meant it—that God
 knows,
 And you perhaps. For Königsmarck himself

I am not so much concerned. He had outrun
 A long lease of indulgence, and cold steel
 Was all in his trade.

Ay, thou fine piece of flesh,
 What wouldst thou with this woman's ware of
 beauty?

Thou had' else been a good soldier.

'Twas ill done

For him, for me whom all my enemies
 And his too powerful friends will hold account-
 able

For your so bloody deed.

[*To the HALBERDIERS.*] Listen, you men,
 All you have done and seen and what you shall
 * do

This night is silence. There's no penalty
 So hard, not even death, but I'll inflict it
 On the man who breathes a syllable. For the
 rest

A well-lined purse is better satisfaction
 To men than gabble.

'Tis an awkward business,
 This of the corpse. Folks will be stirring
 shortly

Outside the palace. *Diantre!* I think I have it.
 There's a disused stairway, a blind entrance
 Near this, under an arras. There we'll hide it
 Till further counsel.

First Halberdier. May it please your Highness,
 The weather's hot. Some noses would scent
 blood

Long before noon to-morrow. There be masons
 Working about the palace and their stuff
 Stands just without. This fellow and myself
 Have been of the trade ; I warrant in an hour
 We build yon carrion up past all discovery,
 If so it please your Highness.

Elector. What ? You can ?
 Fellow, thou bear'st a brain. Take up the body
 And follow me. Some of you before morning
 Must wash this blood away. Though it be little,
 It will tell tales.

[*The HALBERDIERS take up the corpse
 of KÖNIGSMARCK and follow the
 ELECTOR out of the Hall.*]

Madame Platen. This corpse they carry
 Is Königsmarck ; I have looked my last upon
 him

For ever and a day. Soon wilt thou know it,
 Soon wilt thou suffer, Clara : not to-night.
 This blood is the heart's blood of Königsmarck,
 And I have willed it so. Nay, that's extravagant
 Beyond the edge of nightmare, laughable
 For the madness of it. I kill Königsmarck ?
 Yet will I shift the light, I'll see it no more
 For fear of recollections.

[*Looking down the corridor.*]

Princess of Hanover,
 'Tis thou hast murdered him, not I, 'tis thou
 Hast damned my soul to everlasting torment,
 Thou and thy mad kisses.
 Shall I suffer alone ?

I have made all smooth for thee, thou'lt weep
awhile

And then walk virtuously and wear a crown ;
But I shall suffer. No, there shall be some woe,
Some punishment, vengeance shall overtake thee.

[*The ELECTOR returns.*]

Elector. A dark, ill-omened room !

Come with me, Madam,
Seek your apartment, we must make pretence
To sleep. Pray God this matter go no further !

Madame Platen. What of—the corpse ?

Elector. There we are fortunate.
Tools are to hand, bricks, mortar, handy fellows,
And the blind stairway. If there be none wakeful
To note the noise they make building him in,
By morning that your bloody handiwork
Will lie concealed for ever.

Madame Platen. Thus ? No burial ?
Some will surmise——

Elector. The Princess—yet she dare not.

Madame Platen. What of the Princess ?

Elector. Let her enemies
Deal with the Princess. I'll not stand her friend.
A curse on her and you ! A curse on women !
There's Death and Silence yonder, say Amen.
God ! what a tumbled heap of grinning death
Stares at them yet awhile ! An hour ago
This was a man, and full of insolent life,
Amorous and brave, courted, a friend of kings ;
Now like a dead rat mouldering in a wainscote,
He's left till Judgment Day.

Madame Platen. Till Judgment Day.
 [They go out. The lamp flickers and
 dies down.

SCENE III

The same. The Hall is in darkness. The PRINCESS comes in carrying a candle, and followed by LEONORA, who is laden with papers. As they talk the grey light of dawn begins to steal into the Hall.

Leonora. See, there is wood on the hearth, good dry wood,
 Ready for kindling.

[She kindles the fire.
 If your Highness will sit here
 And choose out what's to burn, we'll make a bon-fire
 To celebrate the end of your captivity,
 Though it be some hours too soon.

Princess. No, not a moment.
 Already I am air, they might as easily
 Hold a white mist-wreath which the mounting sun
 Spirits away up the unceiled blue,
 As hold from liberty, and from my love
 This sublimated me.

[She seats herself, and while they talk she sorts out papers which LEONORA burns.

Leonora. I am glad your Highness

Is of so good a courage. Yesterday

You were otherwise.

Princess. Yesterday, Leonora,
Was a blank day, mere blank. I had not seen him,
Seen how fair Fortune and high courage sit
Throned on his face and Love that will be lord
Looks dominance from his eyes and all his body,
Which is as proudly borne as princes' should be,
Speaks victory and that which wins the stars
Out of their promised courses. I am unfortunate.
Here like a shadow in the moon's eclipse,
My fate has blotted his, obscured its brightness,
Which else had been conspicuous. In a moment,
See, it shines out full orb, my star as well,
For Königsmarck is mine and all he has,
And I am nothing save the soul of Königsmarck.

Leonora. This time to-morrow morning
We should be jogging through the dark to Wolfen-
büttel,

I would all were well over.

Princess. So it will be

This time to-morrow morning.

Leonora. I pray God !

Hush ! Do you hear that noise ?

Princess. Poor Leonora !

You are grown so fearful that a rat in the wall
Can make you shudder. Faithful and dear friend,
One day you shall be recompensed for all,
Meantime be not afraid. In this adventure
Is not more peril than we have encountered
Often before, as when my love was ill

And I would visit him, then at Brockhausen
That night in June—at Zell—we were mad to
risk it.

But here all is arranged, the King of Saxony,
The Duke of Wolfenbüttel sworn to protect us,
Once out of Hanover. There's not a point
Is unprepared for us in all the journey,
And you know well how easily we two
May slip away unnoticed.

Leonora. Forgive me, Madam.
I am overwrought. Listen! Those sounds again.
I marvel what they mean.

Princess. Builders at work.

Leonora. At dead of night?

Princess. The night is almost over,
Soon will the topmost towers discern the day.
The day! The day! O last of all the days
I have spent in extreme penury of joy,
In garish misery, unhelped wrong,
And in unpardonable dishonour. God,
Who never granted me so much of happiness
As thy least bird in May, grant to our love
This final brave escape, let us cut loose,
Loose from the tangling years, the coil of circum-
stance,
And stand free before Thee, free to each other;
Grant it and we have sworn by no transgression
Again to offend, to serve Thee all our lives—
Only grant us to-morrow!

[*A slight crash without, as of a brick falling.*

Leonora. Hush! What was that?

Princess. 'Twas here he held me first upon his heart,
 With little kisses lighter than a child's,
 He kissed me here, who with far other kisses
 Has bound me since to him ; and sweet was love
 But ah, how new ! And yet more strange than
 sweet.

And I who all that night woke and remembered
 And singing at heart for joy, esteemed myself
 Happy—what did I know of happiness,
 As now I know it, of long, intimate love ?

Leonora !

Shall I say that also in the time to come,
 When this to-morrow is the yesterday
 Of our new life, when we, husband and wife,
 Under what stars I know not nor consider,
 Spend our unprisoned days, shall I not say it ?
 Revisiting in memory these halls
 Accursed but for one presence, one event,
 Shall I not wonder how these two poor lovers
 Who snatched a brief delight from peril, a proud
 Joy from the edge of shame, how they imagined
 Themselves to have known happiness ? We shall
 know it,
 Calm, perfect happiness.

Up, lingering dawn !

Why dost thou creep so pale, like one afraid ?

I want the sun ! I want to-morrow !

Leonora.

Madam,

There was a hand on the door. What can these
 builders

Be doing here at this hour ?

Princess. Why, they're building.
 What does it matter? Let them build all night.
 I warrant they'll not build a wall so high
 Love cannot overleap it.

Leonora. May Heaven prosper us!
 Let us to bed and sleep and never dream.

[*They prepare to leave the Hall.*]

Princess. Leonora, bring the light. Do you see?
 A stain

Here on the floor, here on my dress, dark red.

Leonora. What can it mean?

Princess. O God! What can it be?
 Answer me, girl.

Leonora. Blood, Madam.

Princess. Blood!—Whose blood?

ACT V

SCENE I

Thirty-three years have elapsed since the murder of KÖNIGSMARCK. The INN-KEEPER'S WIFE and her little daughter GRETTEL are standing outside the inn at Ahlden. LEONORA v. KNESEBECK, who is in a travelling dress and under an assumed name, comes out of the house.

Leonora. The messenger is not returned yet ?

Inn-Keeper's Wife. Madam ?

What messenger ?

Leonora. I sent one to the Governor
Of the castle of Ahlden. He should be returned.
Inn-Keeper's Wife. I warrant the Governor has other
matters

To busy him. There's the poor lady yonder,
Her that was once Princess of Hanover
And is a Queen, they say. We call her Duchess,
Duchess of Ahlden, here. Alas, poor lady !

Leonora. You have news of her ?

Inn-Keeper's Wife. She's very near to death.
I'd not be Duchess, no, nor Princess either,
No, nor a Queen, to lead her life.

Leonora. You have seen her ?

Inn-Keeper's Wife. These thirty years. I was a
 maiden, younger
 Than Gretel here, the first time that I saw her.
 There was a Princess for you and no mistake !
 Beautiful as a picture, and in her hair
 Jewels that sparkled as the wintry stars
 When the frost bites, glitter, strewn on the dark.
 In thirty years she is changed, yet every day,
 Year after year, we have seen her do the same—
 Drive her two leagues to the bridge and back again,
 Backwards and forwards, driving furiously
 As the foul fiend rode after.

Leonora. The same road ?

Always the same ?

Inn-Keeper's Wife. Look you, the King her husband
 Will not allow her out, save these two leagues
 To Hayden Bridge and back. Soldiers go with her
 Galloping with drawn swords.

Leonora. You have spoken with her.

Inn-Keeper's Wife. Not I, Madam, but Gretel was at
 the castle

Only last summer. 'Tis a generous lady,
 Good to the poor, and nothing she loves better
 Than to give presents to the school-children.
 Gretel's a scholar. What did the lady give thee,
 Gretel ?

Gretel. A thimble all pure silver, mother.
 She's a good lady, very kind but sad,
 I'm sure she's sad. Lottie and I creep out
 Sometimes to see her standing at her window
 Looking across the river. There she'll stand

Looking for hours, quietly, like an image,
Till twilight falls, and then I fancy her
Still staring at the dark. I'm very glad
Father is not a king.

Inn-Keeper's Wife. Why, so am I.

I trust I'm honest, nobody in the village
Would gainsay that, yet faith of honest woman,
We'd take it cruel hard if common husbands
Could treat us wives that way for a slip of youth.
Imprisoned all her days like a malefactor!
Yet they do say if there was murder done
It was not she did it.
Poor soul! Her mother
Was used to visit her, but years ago
She died. Friends would come once, but they
are dead

Or they forget, and seldom any come.
It must be sad alone in the old castle.

Leonora. I am sent to visit her by the Queen of Prussia,
Who is daughter of your Duchess.

Inn-Keeper's Wife. Ay, her daughter!
A pretty daughter! Can't she come herself,
Not when her mother's dying? Mind you, Gretel,
I want no daughter like this Queen of Prussia,
But a pious girl, minding her Ten Commandments.

[*A messenger comes in with a letter.*]

Messenger. A letter from the Governor of Ahlden
To the lady from Berlin.

Leonora. [*Opens the letter.*] He gives permission.
Right! Bring me my carriage. I will go
At once to the Princess—to the Castle of Ahlden.

SCENE II

A room in the castle of Ahlden. The PRINCESS lying on a couch, her head and face muffled in a light wrap; a GENTLEMAN IN ATTENDANCE shows in LEONORA.

Gentleman. The lady from her Majesty of Prussia
To visit your Grace. *[He retires.*
[The PRINCESS remains perfectly motionless. LEONORA kneels at her side.

Leonora. Highness! My Princess!

Princess. You call me that? Why, you must be a friend.

Leonora. A friend! A friend that did you long ago
True service and ill service.

Princess. I forget,
I have forgotten everything. I am dying,
So you will pardon me.

Leonora. Madam! My Princess!
Live but a little——

Princess. Live? And thou a friend?

Leonora. Only to look on these time-wearied eyes
And rest your soul on their fidelity.

Princess. O hush! It rests on the smooth river of
death,

It is borne outward, onward, far away.

Leonora. Rest also on my heart. I am Leonora.

Princess. Leonora has escaped—escaped. Ah me!

Leonora. Never had she escaped if but her prison
Had been her dear lady's—never alone.

Princess. The Queen of Prussia sends ? Then she wants money.

Tell her she will have all soon.

Leonora. I am Leonora.

Princess. Art thou indeed faithful ?

Leonora. Let us remember

Our dear youth, for we were young together.

I never had a life separate from yours,

I was but made to be the moon of you,

And since my sun, fallen from her radiant course,

Lay darkling here, darkling I too have wandered.

More brightly for the shadow shines afar

Our sunlit past, and in my long dreams

I live it over. Who else now would recall

Your every smile, details, the dress you wore,

White, branched with red roses, when fifteen

And fresh as May, you drove through the city of
Zell,

And the common people crowding, left their wares
To cry, "God save our Princess."

That was your Mother's day.

What triumph or misery

Endured at Hanover but I was through it,

Always with you ? I have now the *Amadis*

We read at Brockhausen, our favourite flowers

Placed fancifully, to mark the passages.

Princess. The nightingale sang all night in the wood,

And half the day. He was at Brockhausen,

He lay hid in my chamber there. O madness !

Both inconceivably mad !

No wonder we were despised.

Leonora. Who dared despise you ?
 Let little passions pause and creep about
 Eyeing the means. The great ones walk up-
 right,
 But cognisant of the end. When you two loved
 The populous earth seemed as the naked round
 Of the unvisited sea about one sail,
 And all the eyes of the world indifferent
 As heaven's unheeding stars.

Princess. Did we so love,
 Ages ago ? "Only a court intrigue,"
 My mother said, "but Sophie's a born blun-
 derer,
 And had such enemies."
 Ah, poor, poor girl !
 Did he not really love her ?

Leonora. He ? Remember !

Princess. All's unremembered in that secret place
 Where he lies sepulchred. We are both buried,
 Our hearts are dust, and all the rest a shadow.

Leonora. You were his life, and when he let it go
 It passed sighing your name. He was no better
 Than others are, and yet in this was better—
 He loved beyond the others.

Princess. We were punished
 Greatly as we had loved. God would disdain
 To pluck and gather with a dreadful hand
 Moths from the mouth of Hell.

[*The GENTLEMAN IN ATTENDANCE comes in.*]

Gentleman. The court physicians
 Have come from Hanover to attend your Grace.

Princess. Let them be well refreshed, repose their horses ;

And back to Hanover ! I will not see them.

[He goes out.]

Come, let us talk a little ere I go,
 Pass from my living grave to the profound
 Delightful peace of death. I would recall
 The long days we have lived, we two, Leonora,
 Children together. How much happiness
 God gave us in the old castle of Zell,
 When we were children ! You remember Philip ?
 Were we not friends ? Even then we loved each
 other,

So joyously, so innocently loved.

Dear, let me take your hand, lead me along
 By sweet familiar ways to the unknown,
 The still portal of death.

May God requite thee,
 My earliest friend, Leonora.

*[The GOVERNOR of the Castle of Ahlden
 comes in, bringing the COURT
 PHYSICIANS from Hanover, and ac-
 companied by gentlemen in attend-
 ance.]*

Governor. Your Grace will pardon me a forced intrusion ?

The King commands these great physicians visit you,

Whom, being so commanded, I may not hinder,
 Although your Grace denied them.

First Physician.

Noble Duchess,

Please you recline. Ah ! We have black humours,
 The vital spirits disordered. We should welcome
 Those who can do us good. The King's own
 Majesty

Commissioned us in his deep anxious care
 For your Grace's welfare, troubled at the news
 Which told him you were suffering——

Princess. Dying. I know

The King is troubled, for the hour approaches
 When in the shining volume of the stars
 Fate has inscribed that as the dead count time,
 A moment shall elapse ere George of England
 Must meet his wife, and meet her before God.
 The King is troubled. You, his emissaries,
 Come to prevent me in my wished journey,
 Dreadful to him, where he shortly must follow
 Naked on winds of death, my eager spirit
 Rushing with rapture forth. Bid him prepare.
 The hour, the inexorable hour has come.
 Though he should silence every sounding tower
 Whose hollow throat knells it across the world
 After the travelling sun, that hour will toll
 In Heaven's high judgment hall. I summon him
 Who was my judge, to leave his power and great-
 ness,
 His gold, his mistresses and sensual ease,
 His hireling friends and titled sycophants,
 All to abandon and with me to appear,
 Who to Eternal Justice do accuse him,
 Before the throne of God. I summon him
 And know he must obey. Merciful God,—

